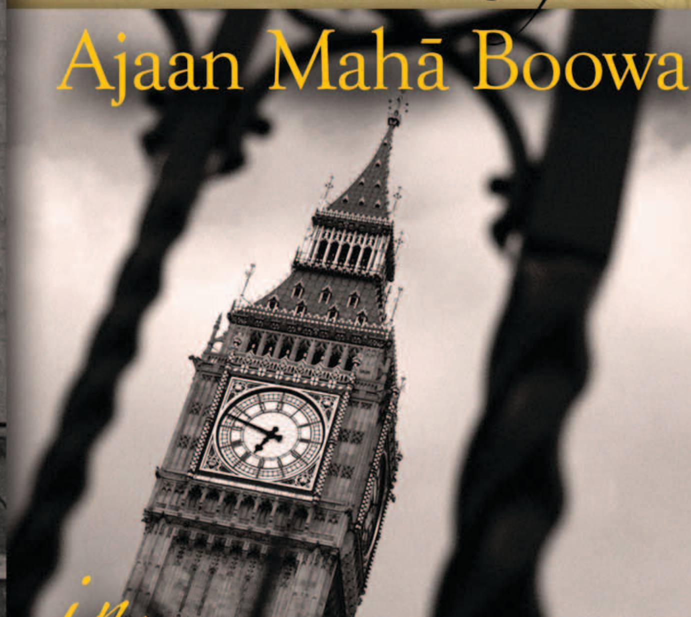


The Dhamma Teaching *of* Ajaan Mahā Boowa *in* LONDON





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The talks and answers to questions given by
Venerable Ajaan Mahā Boowa (Bhikkhu Ñāṇasampanno Mahā Thera)
while visiting the Dhammapadipa Vihāra in London, in June of 1974.

Translated by:

Venerable Ajaan Paññāvaḍḍho

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“The Gift of Dhamma Excels All Other Gifts”
—The Lord Buddha

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Introduction

The Venerable Ajaan Mahā Boowa Ñāṇasampanno accepted an invitation to go to England in June 1974 together with two other *Bhikkhus*, Venerable Paññāvaḍḍho and Venerable Abhiceto, originally from the U.K. and Canada respectively. All three had the good fortune to be able to stay at the Dhammapadipa Vihāra in Haverstock Hill which was run by the English Sangha Trust. It was there that Ajaan Mahā Boowa gave the talks recorded in this book, the only exception being the discussion on 13th June in the morning at Cambridge, when the *Bhikkhus* went to receive food at Mr. Benedic Wint's house.

The talks given by Ajaan Mahā Boowa were tape recorded, but the questions and answers were mostly taken down in shorthand by M.R. Sermsri Kasemsri. It is mainly due to her efforts, not only in taking down the questions and answers, but also in subsequently transcribing all the talks and her shorthand notes and typing out the manuscript, that the Thai book was produced from which this translation was made.

Translation from Thai into English does not normally present any special problems. But the origin of this book was the spoken word; in addition, the subject

matter is Dhamma, which involves many concepts and technical terms for which English has a rather poor vocabulary—and often a lack of the necessary fundamental concepts.

The teachings of Buddhism may in fact be compared to a technical subject such as chemistry or electronics in that many technical terms and phrases are necessary. Special concepts and ways of thinking are needed in order to understand and appreciate the reasoning and truth of Buddhism.

When it comes to a question of whether to translate a technical word (nearly always from the Pāli language into English), the reasoning that has been used is as follows: If a word in Pāli has a well-known and accurate equivalent in English, then the English word is used (e.g., *sati*—mindfulness; *paññā*—wisdom). But if there is no well-known or accurate equivalent, or if the use of an English word leads to more confusion or misunderstanding than the original Pāli word, then the Pāli word is used (e.g., *samādhi*, *jhāna*).

I must apologise to those people who are not familiar with Pāli terms and so find it difficult to read a book like this which has many Pāli terms. But I feel sure that it is far better for readers to not understand rather than to misunderstand. In any case, following on this introduction is a short list of those Pāli words that occur frequently in this book, together with a brief assessment of their meaning, so that the reader who is not familiar with those words can have a ready reference. There is also a more complete glossary at the end of the book.

I should like to thank all those who have helped to produce this book, including M.R. Sermsri Kasemsri for her work on the original book in Thai; Mr. Michael Shameklis for his help in editing the translation of the first thirty or so pages; Bhikkhu Abhijāto for helping to correct many translation mistakes; and to Bhikkhu Cittobhāso for typing out the manuscript.

Bhikkhu Paññāvaḍḍho

Wat Pa Baan Taad, Udorn Thani — Thailand

Brief List of Pāli terms that are usually left untranslated in the text:

1. *Citta*—The heart (in the emotional sense; not the physical heart), the "one who knows" (but often knows wrongly). The nearest English equivalent is the word "mind," except that "mind" is usually understood as being the thinking, reasoning apparatus located in the head, which is too narrow a meaning for the word *citta*.
2. *Dhamma*—(1) the ultimate meaning is: that basis which is behind all phenomena and is thus the truth. It is unchanging and thus not knowable by that which is impermanent. (2) the Buddha Dhamma, meaning those practices and ways of behaviour that conforms to Dhamma and lead one towards Dhamma.
3. *Dukkha*—discontent, dissatisfaction, suffering, pain, anguish. *Dukkha* is a very broad and general term covering all those things that are unpleasant, irritating and disturbing.
4. *Kilesas*—Those defiling states arising from greed, hatred and delusion which constantly tend to lead us against Dhamma.
5. *Nibbāna*—The state of the *citta* in which all the *kilesas* and *dukkha* have been eradicated.
6. *Samādhi*—Absorption of the mind when concentrating one-pointedly on an object. It has many levels and few people know more than the initial stages of it.
7. *Vimutti*—Freedom or Liberation, in the sense of freedom from the *kilesas*, *dukkha* and attachment to the mundane relative world (*sammuti*).

Note:

The letters and numbers in the margins opposite the questions have the following meanings. "Q" = question, numbered Q1, Q2, etc.; "A" = answer. "W" means that a woman asked the question, and "M" means that a man asked the question. The numbers W1, W2, etc., and M1, M2, etc., refer to the first, second, or third, etc., woman or man to ask a question.

First Meeting

Sunday, June 9th, 1974

Questions and Answers

Q1 W1: In establishing mindfulness of breathing, should we fix our attention at the nose or in the stomach region?

A: In establishing mindfulness of breathing, you should fix your *sati* (mindfulness) on and contemplate the point of contact of the breath.

You should not go up and down with it, but keep the *citta* (mind) fixed on the point of contact. If the breath seems to become fainter and fainter, it is nothing to be afraid of or to worry about; the breath has not ceased—it is still there. The kind of meditation which a person practices depends on the character of each individual practitioner, but the development of the mindfulness of breathing is a practice suitable for the majority of people. The important factor in any method of mind-development is mindfulness (*sati*). Forgetting mindfulness means failing in your task, and you will not get good results. You should therefore take care of your mindfulness and keep it present when using any method of mind-development.

Q2 W1: When sitting in meditation, why is it I get the feeling that there is something pulling my forehead backwards? The muscles in my forehead become tight and I get a headache. Is there any way to remedy this?

A: You will have to lessen the intenseness which brings this about. Let the *citta* be absorbed only in the breathing. If you are too intense, you will get a headache. The flow of the *citta* is very important. You can concentrate strongly or mildly, and what you concentrate on will give you results, much or little accordingly.

Q3 M1: My being a Buddhist has caused my friends to talk about me. They say that at one time I used to be a person full of fun and high spirits, and that now I am the exact opposite. I have lost a lot of friends, and even my wife misunderstands me and disagrees with me. How can I solve this problem?

A: Being a Buddhist does not mean that you must be quiet or look solemn. If friends try to get you to go in a way which is unwholesome and you are observing the moral precepts (*sīla*), you should not follow them. You might lose your friends but you will not lose yourself. If you are satisfied that you have gone the way of wholesomeness, you should consider the Buddha as an example. He was a prince who had a large retinue and many friends. He renounced the world, gave up those friends, and went to dwell alone for many years. After he had attained Enlightenment, he was surrounded by friends and had many disciples who were *Arahants* (Pure Ones), monks as well as nuns, lay men and lay women, until the number of Buddhists was more than the population of the world.

We all believe in the teachings of the Buddha, which unites the hearts and minds of all Buddhists. We therefore should not be afraid of having no friends.

We should think, first of all, that our friends do not yet understand us, and so they drift away and no longer associate with us. Our way of practice in the way

of wholesomeness still remains, however. We should see that there are still good people in the world!

Good people eventually meet and become friends with other good people, and these good people will be our friends. If there are no good people in the world, and if there is nobody interested in associating with us, then we should associate with the Dhamma—with Buddho, Dhammo and Sangho in our hearts, which is better than friends who are not interested in goodness at all. Buddho, Dhammo and Sangho are friends which are truly excellent.

Ordinarily, those good friends of yours will come back to you. You should therefore rest assured that if your heart is satisfied that you are going in a wholesome direction, then that is enough. You should not be concerned with or worry about others more than yourself. You should be responsible for yourself in the present and in the future, for there is nobody but yourself who can raise you up to a higher level.

Q4 W1: I also have that same experience. My mother knows that I have become a Buddhist, and she is so upset that she prays to God for my return to Christianity once again. She is very concerned about me. How should I help her?

A: My mother was also worried about my coming to England. She was afraid that I might die or that something serious might happen. But I saw that there were good reasons for coming to which she could hardly object, so even though she did not want me to come, she had to accept those reasons—and I came.

Please understand that Buddhism does not teach people to draw away from each other. Buddhism and Christianity both teach people to be good so that they will be happy and go to heaven. If we compare the city of London to heaven, we could tell people that there are many ways to enter the city. When they have chosen a way and made use of it, all of them will reach London. Whatever religion they have, they should practise it accordingly. Then they will meet in heaven.

Buddhism, however, besides having a way to reach heaven, also has the way to reach *Nibbāna*. If one understands and practises according to the teachings and wants to reach *Nibbāna*, there are ways for going beyond. *Nibbāna* means the complete absence of *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness, suffering, disease). The Buddha and his *Arahant* disciples, being completely free from all defilements (*kilesas*), have all attained *Nibbāna*. They therefore should not be worried about anyone who follows them. You should explain this to your mother so that she will not worry about you, for what Buddhism teaches will be for the stability and prosperity of society. It encourages people to be good, so tell your mother not to worry, that Buddhism is not hell, and that it does not bring disaster or ruin to those who practise its teachings.

Q5 W1: My husband is the same. He does not understand what it is that I am doing and he is not at all satisfied with me. It took me twenty years of asking him to let me sit in meditation before he would allow me to do so. I've been sitting in meditation for five years now. My husband does not understand about spiritual needs, and so whenever I meet someone whose interest is the same as mine, someone to turn to and be friends with, my husband becomes suspicious.

A: When your husband saw that what you were doing was good, that you were not doing anything which was wrong, he consented of his own accord. This is what usually happens in the practice of virtue, which is a difficult thing to do. Even in our own heart we hesitate to do good things. When we think of doing something good, another thought arises to prevent us from doing it. Such conflicting thoughts are bound to struggle with each other before we can turn to the way of virtue.

Other people interfering with us is a normal obstacle, but people cannot vie with us in the hindrances we make for ourselves. This is probably the case with everyone. When we want to do something good, which is useful, a state of mind is liable to arise as a hindrance, thus preventing it, so we then waste a lot of time. Beyond that, it can lead us to do evil things which are really quite harmful.

Q6 W2: If we know that something is not good, we can restrain ourselves, keeping ourselves from doing it. Or, if the desire to do something is so strong t hat we will end up doing it anyway, we can go ahead and do it until we get the bad results—then we will dread it. For example, we know that we'll get a stomachache from eating too many sweets. We can go ahead and eat until we get the stomachache, then we will automatically stop. Which one of these two methods is better?

A: Knowing what is not good, training the heart and restraining yourself by not allowing yourself to do something bad is better, because no harm is done. If you make use of the method of giving free rein to the heart, of indulging in your desires until you experience their bad results and then stops by yourself, how does you know that you won't die before you can bring yourself around? And it is just possible that you will not know the way to get back. This can lead to the ruining of your life.

Q7 M2: I use the method of being aware of the rising and falling of the stomach region, and it seems as if there is something rubbing my stomach. What is this?

A: Are you satisfied with that sensation or not? When you practise meditation and the *citta* is quiet and cool, this is good. Then you get the feeling that there is something hard rubbing your stomach. But when the *citta* is quiet, you are satisfied, this is what matters.

When you get a feeling that there is something rubbing against your stomach, you should understand that this is only a state of mind manifesting itself, that there is nothing real or useful to the *citta* in it. You should then make the *citta* be aware of the rising and falling. Do not let the mind dwell on the sensation of rubbing. That sensation will subside and pass away by itself.

Q8 W3: When I sit in meditation and my mind is close to being one-pointed, close to being calm, it usually withdraws from this state. It goes in and out, in and out, as if it was about to go through a door but then will not go through. How can I correct this?

A: When sitting in meditation, are you not aware of the breath going in and out? If you are and you follow the breath in and out, this will happen. You should fix your mind only on the place where there is contact with the moving air. You will then feel the breath become fainter and fainter until it ceases altogether. The *citta* will then enter the state of tranquility (*samatha*), and it will not go in and out, in and out, as you said.

Q9 W1: In meditation practice, is it better to sit alone or to sit in a group? I and four friends study meditation with the Chao Khun at Wat Buddhapadipa—who has since disrobed. When I sit by myself, I feel that it is good. But when I sit with my four friends, I feel anxious and then my practice is not very good. My friends are beginners. Can we help each other or not?

A: You've sat in meditation in a group before, how do you feel about it? Are you satisfied or not? If you feel that you are giving strength to each other, that is good. Even if you yourself feel anxious, yet your friends may gain strength from you to meditate, that again is good.

Bhikkhus usually sit in meditation by themselves except when they go to listen to the instruction from their teacher. Apart from that, each does his own practice without worrying about anyone else. The *citta* can become relaxed and peaceful more quickly than sitting in a group, because there is nothing to disturb it or to make it anxious.

Q10 W1: When my meditation is good, there seems to be some kind of thread extending about one foot out of my body. Then something seems to come and strike it. This is very painful.

A: How is it now? Is it still there or not?

W1: It does not happen anymore now because I felt that pain to be *dukkha*. I was patient and countered it, then it went away by itself.

A: That feeling is an emotional production—*ārammaṇa*—of the *citta*. Sitting in meditation does not cause it to arise. It is the *citta* itself which causes it to arise. If you bring the *citta* back to the heart-base in the chest and firmly hold it there, such a feeling will go away by itself.

Q11 W1: Sometimes it seems as though my *citta* goes out to my friend or my friend's *citta* comes to me.

A: That is sending the *citta* outside of oneself which is not good for a person who has just begun meditation practice. Only those who are skilled at practice can send their *citta* inside and outside without difficulty because they already know the way to practice.

Ven. Paññāvaḍḍho: When at first we sat down here, Tan Ajaan Mahā Boowa explained that in practising mindfulness of breathing, one should contemplate the in-breath and the out-breath until the breath is very fine. One keeps the *citta* firmly fixed at the point of contact until there seems to be no more breathing. The *citta* will then be peaceful. There is no need to be afraid of the breath stopping, it will still be there. When the breath has become fine, the *citta* will feel cool, peaceful. Sometimes, as far as one can tell, breathing seems to have ceased altogether, and the *citta* is then very subtle.

W1: Please express our appreciation to Ajaan Mahā Boowa for his kindness in coming to talk to us. We are very pleased indeed.

Tan Ajaan Mahā Boowa: Buddhism is derived from practice, because the Buddha himself practised until he himself knew and saw and was able to do it for himself, and only then did he begin to teach others. Buddhists therefore understand the importance of practising and training themselves according to the teachings. Learning for the purpose of gaining knowledge and understanding, but without putting it into regular practice, will not bring results as it ought to. One should therefore study and practice moral precepts (*sīla*) until it becomes higher morality (*adhisīla*), study all the different levels of wisdom (*paññā*) until one reaches the level of higher wisdom (*adhipaññā*), and study freedom (*vimutti*). One must then practise until one truly reaches freedom, until one has truly escaped (from *saṁsāra*). Practise is therefore the most important part of Buddhism.

When someone who practises has reached any particular state of development, he will know this for himself. For example, if he practices the development of mindfulness of breathing, he will know what the state of his breath is, and he will know to what extent the *citta* is quiet, still and peaceful. But he must have mindfulness and he must not let the *citta* wander outside. For someone who is beginning to practise, the most important thing is the *citta* and mindfulness. The *citta* will improve if mindfulness is there to control it, and it will then be peaceful, cheerful, bright, and happiness will come by itself. But if the *citta* is not controlled by mindfulness, and if it is allowed free rein so that any and all thoughts can insert themselves, the *citta* will not be peaceful and happiness will not arise. Therefore, the most important rule is to not let the imagination give rise to emotionally charged thoughts. Train the *citta* to be truly peaceful, then happiness will follow in the wake of the calm which gradually develops. A high degree of calm means a high degree of happiness—until it reaches an extraordinary happiness which comes from the more subtle levels of concentration.

For myself, I feel that today is a fortunate occasion in that I have been able to meet you English Buddhists. I'm sorry that I can't speak to you in English and must depend on Ven. Paññāvaḍḍho to help translate for me. On this auspicious occasion, let us all sit in meditation together, each practising according to his ability. Some of you can perhaps sit for a long time and some of you may tire quickly. Let each of you decide for how long you can sit before you get bodily discomfort and pain arising so that you gradually withdraw from *samādhi*. You should, however, try to put up with the pain and discomfort for a while because you really want happiness of heart. You have already experienced and know enough about other kinds of happiness and you have no doubts about them, enough not to be attracted to them.

When I was able to sit in meditation for twelve or thirteen hours and it became painful, I contemplated the place where the pain was and asked, "What is it that's painful? A finger? A bone? If they are painful, why are they not painful after one is dead? Why is it that they are painful now? If the *citta* is where the pain is, then if one does not have a body does that mean that the *citta* dies too, or not?" and so on until I reached the truth (*Sacca dhamma*). But if you are going to contemplate painful feeling, you must be brave enough to find the truth. Your desire to know the truth must be stronger than the pain and death. Mindfulness and wisdom must be continually traversing throughout your mind and body like a wheel which is turning; then you can know.

Q12 M2: What is the benefit of sitting in *samādhi* for a long time?

A: Merely sitting for a long time is not good. You must get good results from your sitting. Then, being engrossed in contemplation, a long time will pass by itself. The final result will be that you become happy and free from pain, and that is good. If you arouse wisdom, when it has arisen the *citta* will be bright and cheerful, so it

will gain strength. In the future, it will not give up when strong pain arises while sitting in meditation for a long time.

Q13 M2: Should we then simply know that the pain in our bones or fingers is *dukkha*?

A: Only knowing that it is *dukkha* is not enough. You must contemplate it, examining it with wisdom until you completely understand it. For example, you should contemplate where the exact location of that *dukkha* is, and why those who have died do not feel pain. The dead do not know anything: if you take a corpse and burn it, it does not feel the heat. "Knowing that something is painful"—what is that? Is it the *citta*? When the body dies, does the *citta* die as well?

When you search for and find the basis of truth (*Sacca dhamma*), you understands clearly because you truly know the heart that is freed from attachment. If the heart is still attached, you do not know truly. The more you want to be rid of *dukkha*, the more the *dukkha* and the origin of *dukkha* (*samudaya*) will increase in your heart. Instead of getting rid of the origin of *dukkha*, you succeed only in increasing it more than ever.

Q14 M2: If we understand natural phenomena clearly and thoroughly, we will then see *dukkha* as natural, normal; is that not right?

A: Know *dukkha*, know the nature of the body, know that having a body is *dukkha*, and know that the body is its own *dukkha*. Know the nature of *citta*; and knowing the *citta*'s natural state, know that the *citta* by itself has no *dukkha*. Why does the *citta* have *dukkha* at all? If you truly knows all this, *Sacca dhamma* will help to free you from *dukkha*. No amount of *dukkha* can affect the heart if both these aspects are truly known in their relationship to each other.

Comment: I am very glad to hear that the pain and suffering which we get arises and passes away, and to learn how to train the *citta* to get rid of them until freedom is reached.

A: In practising Dhamma, each person has various experiences and when we ask questions about these experiences and people hear about each other's experiences, we gradually widen our understanding. This encourages us and gives us all heart.

Ajaan Mahā Boowa then invited those present to sit in meditation. He himself sat in meditation for a time before returning to his quarters, leaving the lay people there each to sit in meditation as long as they liked.

Second Meeting

Monday, June 10th, 1974

Ajaan Mahā Boowa began by asking the following question: "Is there anything in particular that you would like to discuss today?" When those in the room remained silent, the he spoke as follows:

Sitting in meditation while listening to an explanation of Dhamma will greatly help to calm the *citta*. I shall therefore begin with an explanation of Dhamma, and while you are listening please feel free to make use of whatever method of meditation you have practised before. When the *citta* is calm, you will naturally receive the taste of Dhamma, each according to his own level of practice.

The Buddhist religion which we profess today is the Dhamma to which the Buddha had attained. His name was Samaṇa Gotama. He searched for and practised many ways which he saw would bring him to the attainment of the *Sacca dhamma* (truth) that he was seeking.

The word "Dhamma" means the teaching of a Buddha, which is a new Dhamma and a new era that follows upon the Enlightenment of each Buddha and the teaching which he gives to the world. Truly speaking, the "real" Dhamma is always in the world right from the beginning. But this real, original Dhamma is never touched

by that which is conventional or mundane (*sammuti*), even though it is always in contact with the heart. But, although these forms of Dhamma are always present in the world, we lack the ability to see them.

What sort of thing is Dhamma? There is Dhamma as cause and Dhamma as result. Because of this, people are led to think in all sorts of ways that have almost nothing to do with Dhamma or religion.

The word "*Sāsana*" means teaching—the teaching which arose as the result of those practices done by the Buddha as he searched for knowledge and truth until he found it. Because he searched in the right way, he attained results which satisfied his heart. He then proclaimed this teaching to those people in the world who were suited to receive the *Sāsana-dhamma*—the training and teaching of Buddhism.

Teaching Dhamma to a world full of blindness so that it would come to know the truth was very difficult for the Buddha—it was no light task. Before he proclaimed his teaching to the world, men already had various thoughts and ideas, the majority of which were contradictory to the Dhamma. Teaching was therefore very difficult, but being one of the "Great Teachers of the World" means taking a great burden on oneself. Very few people desire to become a Buddha, because ordinary men, unlike Buddhas, do not want to shoulder the great burden of teaching the world.

No one can teach the people of the world as correctly or as accurately as the Buddha did, so he was given the name of "The Highest Teacher in the World". There is no one comparable to the Buddha because he is superior to all human beings. His teaching is fully complete in both cause and effect. Nothing is missing from the teachings which he taught to all beings.

With regards to Dhamma, he explained wholesome (*kusala*) and unwholesome (*akusala*), and neither wholesome nor unwholesome (*abyākata*) Dhamma. This Dhamma is *svākkhāta-dhamma*—Dhamma which is well-explained. The essence of

this Dhamma is in the Eightfold Path, which is the Middle Way. If we were to compare the Middle Way to food, its taste would be delicious, for it would not be too salty, too tasteless, or too spicy. If we were to compare it to clothes, it would be well cut and tailored to fit the person wearing it. It would not be like inexpensive clothes which are mass-produced. The teaching of Dhamma is therefore the Middle Way, which is appropriate in both its causes and its effects from the beginning to the end.

Not only is Dhamma the Middle Way, but also the things that we depend on in the world. If we tried to do everything in the Middle Way, it would be something worth seeing, worth admiring, worth living in and making use of. Those men and women, monks and novices who practised the Dhamma of the Middle Way would be lovely persons worthy of respect. Both the world and the Dhamma would be cool and quiet, so it would be a good world to live in. There would be no complaining that "the world is in trouble", or that "we are in trouble", or "he is in trouble", as is heard at present.

Everything is burning with trouble now, so we have practically no world left to live in. This is because people do not take into consideration the principles of Dhamma which are correct and good. A world divorced from Dhamma—that is, goodness—is therefore a world which is contrary to Dhamma. People are contrary to Dhamma, and this contrariness to Dhamma has the power to produce endless worry and confusion. As long as we refuse to see our faults and refuse to stop our opposition to Dhamma, this world will continue to experience *dukkha*.

Magga means the path, which the Buddha declared using the principles of the Middle Way. It is therefore the only path which always leads straight and steadfastly to *vimutti* (freedom). It is never outdated and never has to be altered or changed in any way to keep up with changing situations and changing times. Even if all things should go on changing until they turn and turn about, the Dhamma of the Middle Way (*majjhima-dhamma*) will still be the Dhamma which is always

consistent. If we liken it to a medicine, it would be a medicine that doctors have already experimented with and proven the worth of and which is being used to cure disease. All Dhammas have already been completely tried and proven by the Buddha, so there's no reason for doubting or being skeptical about them, for the proving of these Dhammas resulted in the enlightenment of the Buddha. Furthermore, all of the Buddha's disciples also attained the field of *vimutti* by means of these Dhammas in the same way.

We have come together today to train our minds to be calm and cool. The normal state of the mind is such that it has no Middle Way. It continually tends to go to the extremes of thinking and imagining, so its moods are always in a state of confusion. Or, in other words, what the heart is used to and likes leads it away from what it should be doing. We must therefore make use of the Dhamma principles of the Buddha as a means to train the *citta* to be calm—and however much or little one does this, it will not be without results.

Whoever makes use of any method of meditation, as, for example, paying attention to one's breath (*ānāpānasati*) or the repetition (*parikamma*) of "Buddho," "Dhammo," or "Sangho," should have mindfulness to control the *citta*. The *citta* should not be allowed to wander, for if it does you will not get good results and the *citta* will not get calm. In the Dhamma it says "*Natthi santi paraṁ sukhaṁ*", which means "there is no happiness greater than peace". This shows that the *citta* must be peaceful and calm to attain happiness, so you should try to make it calm. The *citta* which is not calm will tend to be agitated continually, so even when it's asleep it dreams of all sorts of things. If your *citta* thinks a lot, it will cause fantastic dreams and talking in your sleep. For when your sleep is not deep, dreaming will occur; whereas a deep sleep is a sleep without dreams. So train to make the *citta* calm down. Whether the *citta* becomes calm, and to what degree, will depend on the ability of each person. If the *citta* is very calm, there will be a great deal of happiness. This is the first step of the training.

The value of the mind will then be apparent to you so that you can admire it at that time while it is peaceful, because there is nothing of greater value than a quiet mind. I would ask that you make your minds steadily overcome the difficulties and laziness, which are things that usually overcome us the whole time. We believe that we cannot overcome them because we have seen their power, but if we think we are able to fight them, and if we really do fight them, then the time will arrive when we can overcome them. We hear of victories in regard to such things as sports, but with regard to *kilesas* (defilements) we only hear of giving in to them. Perhaps this is because we fall on our faces before the *kilesas* and let them walk all over our backs.

The Buddha's religion shook the world because it was tested and proven by someone whose heart was pure. The Enlightenment of the Buddha shook his heart; that is, it shook the *kilesas* in his heart just as if the world itself were shaken.

Even though we have never before seen or experienced any results from Buddhism, we will surprise ourselves when the *citta* becomes calm, because this initial training will greatly move the heart when the *citta* and Dhamma come together in a state of unreserved completeness.

Religion (*Sāsana*) is not a trifling matter. It exists with everyone of us. It is not just a thing of this person or that person, nor does it just belong to the Buddha. He taught us so that we would be good people and have worth appropriate to a human being. He taught that the virtue and value which comes from the religion is our own wealth right up to the Path, Fruition and *Nibbāna*. This lies within the reach of each Buddhist who resolves to practice. He can be one who possesses and savours the results of it endlessly. Unlike other forms of wealth that people crave, which are impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*), the wealth of Buddhism never runs out.

Therefore, Buddhism belongs to each of us, and not only to this or that ethnic group, class or caste.

Questions and Answers

Q1 M1: What is the *citta*? Is it not attention?

A: In the four *iddhipāda* (paths of accomplishment), *citta* is attention. When it is combined with recollecting, it becomes mindfulness (*sati*). The *citta* likes to go wherever it pleases; and in whatever the *citta* does, it is not afraid of doing wrong, nor is it afraid of danger. If mindfulness does not restrain it, it may stray and go for unchecked pleasure seeking. To make an analogy, the *citta* is like an animal and mindfulness is like the person who trains and controls the animal. If the *citta* which is possessed by *kilesas* is trained and controlled by mindfulness, it will slowly become disciplined and the *kilesas* can then be eradicated. When it is also accompanied by wisdom (*paññā*) to investigate and extract the *kilesas*, the *citta* will become clearer and brighter. When the *citta* becomes brighter and brighter, you will discover that the *citta* is becoming more and more subtle and that it has more strength and power. The *citta* can become pure through the practice of meditation, but you cannot understand the *citta* merely by reading books, for you can only come to know the real *citta* by practising the way. Then you will gradually come to see the true nature of the *citta* a little more each time until you see it clearly and all doubts vanish. Practice is therefore extremely important if you want to know the *citta*, because you can come to know the real *citta* absolutely clearly and eliminate all doubts only by means of practice. There is no other way in which you can know it.

Q2 W1: People in England study Buddhism from books. They do not know that there is a *citta*, because Buddhism is not taught here according to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. The result is that people are led to understand that the *citta* is mindfulness

and wisdom. I therefore think it necessary for Ven. Paññāvaḍḍho to have Ajaan Mahā Boowa give us some understanding of the *citta*.

Ven Paññāvaḍḍho to Ajaan Mahā Boowa (in Thai): People in this country understand *citta* to mean 'thinking'. They understand that the *citta* is divided into the forms of the *citta* which come from seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching; in other words "consciousness" (*viññāṇa*).

A: That aspect of the *citta* which arises when something comes into contact with eyes, ears, nose, etc., and which knows and receives that contact is called "consciousness" (*viññāṇa*). It arises and ceases together with that contact. As for the *citta* that knows these things, it does not cease together with the consciousness when it ceases; it does not cease even though the body ceases, for it will go on and take rebirth in the future. There is no end to it as long as the "sap of the heart", which is the *kilesas* and *avijjā* (ignorance), remains in the heart. But when this "sap" of the *kilesas* has been removed from the heart, there is an end to continual becoming and birth, as happened with the Buddha and his *Arahant* disciples.

Q3 M1: This 'one who knows' which we call our 'self', is this not *attā* ? Or is it *anattā* (not-self)?

A: If we compare the 'one who knows' with stairs, such as the ones used to reach this room, then we will have to take hold of them as 'self' and let go of each step one after the other until we reach this room, which is our goal. If at the beginning we do not cling to the self, we can go widely off course because we have no basis to hold on to. We have to make use of the self as the way which will lead us to the state of not clinging to self. Therefore, at this stage, we should not go thinking about self and not-self (*attā* and *anattā*). We must at first make use of self before we can reach our goal. The question of *attā*, *anattā* and the *citta* will be dropped by

itself, just as happened when we climbed the staircase until we reached this room, when the problem of us and the staircase vanished of its own accord.

Q4 M2: When we compare the *citta* to the stairs, must we let go of the *citta* in the same way we let go of the stairs when we reached the last step?

A: When we have trained the *citta*, we gain different levels and we let go of each level until we reach the last step. It then stops by itself and we do not have to force it. If one is going to do this, one must reach the level of "super-mindfulness" (*mahā-sati*) and "super-wisdom" (*mahā-paññā*) because this is the level which is suitable for letting go of the conventional world (*sammuti*) in all its aspects. From that point on there is no more attachment or clinging in the *citta*.

Q5 W2: What are some of the benefits of meditation?

A: You become calm. The heart is cool, peaceful, completely rational and self-controlled. You do not do anything following your desires that is contrary to reason. You will always consider what is good and what is bad, both for yourself and for others. It makes you become a person who does not feel the *dukkha* of gloominess always in your heart. The heart will have a basic principle and will not drift about aimlessly as it used to. It is like a man who has a job as his basic principle, or who has food and a house to live in and depend on. Such a person is not troubled.

Q6 W2: How do we train ourselves in meditation?

A: You can use the method of *ānāpānasati* or the method of repeating "Buddho", "Dhammo" or "Sangho". It depends on the nature of each person. The various methods of meditation will all bring calm to the heart, and even if one uses the word "death" as the preparatory repetition, this is also training the heart, for it is important that the heart gets a feeling of sorrow and weariness of itself. It will

then see the evil in those things which the heart clings to, things which one really likes.

Why, when we train the *citta*, do we focus the *citta* on only this or that object? In focusing the *citta* on the breath, we should know the breath as it goes in and out at the nose all the time, but this is not a breathing exercise. This is like using bait to catch a fish—what you want to catch is the fish. Or, if we make a simile of the *citta* of someone who has not yet been trained, his *citta* will be scattered in various places, like a fish net which has been cast into the water and spreads out wide until one can no longer see what it looks like. If we want to know the *citta*, we will have to take hold of the leader, that is, the string on the net which one uses to draw it together. When we pull on the leader, the rest of the net comes together until we can see it and hold it in our hands.

The *citta* is where we ourselves are. We are the owners of the *citta*, but we cannot force it to become whatever we want it to be. We assume that form (*rūpa*), memory (*saññā*), feeling (*vedanā*), thoughts (*sankhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) are the *citta*, but in reality, these aggregates can all be separated from each other. We can begin to see this when we practice meditation. Then we will be able to promote the *citta* so that it improves. When we have practiced, we will gradually see that the *citta* is the 'lord of birth and death'. If we make merit, practise generosity, guard our moral precepts and practise meditation, we promote the *citta* so that it improves—it becomes brighter and is raised to a higher level. But if we follow our desires and are not afraid of demerit and unwholesomeness, the *citta* will do whatever it likes. Not being controlled, the *citta* will deteriorate and meet with nothing but *dukkha*. When we are downhearted and don't know what to do, we let go and are then besieged by *dukkha*, even though we are aware of the problem. It is because people do not know how to change *dukkha* into happiness that we experience *dukkha*, and *dukkha* is just what we don't want.

The *citta* that has been trained until it is freed from defilements and therefore pure, must still depend on the aggregates while they remain alive. But the duty and work of one whose *citta* is pure will be only for the good of the world. This pure *citta* is called *Arahant* or *Arahat*. The person who is an *Arahant* has a *citta* that is entirely pure in all respects. His *citta* is completely free from anything that can cause it to be born again. While he is still alive, it will encounter happiness which is entirely satisfying. When he dies, it has absolute bliss and it has no *dukkha*, nor any involvement with the mundane, relative world (*sammuti*).

Thus there is a saying of the Buddha which states: *Nibbānaṁ Paramaṁ Suññaṁ* which means "*Nibbāna* is entirely empty"—empty of all *dukkha*. But it does not mean that when one has attained *Nibbāna* there is nothing left, as the world understands "emptiness" to mean. But one also does not "exist" in the way that the world exists. In other words, the happiness of *Nibbāna* is happiness specific to *Nibbāna* without any of the mundane conventions. If the *citta* still wears the form of the aggregates when the defilements have been completely eradicated, it means that it has attained to freedom.

Freedom (*vimutti*) and the mundane world (*sammuti*) are very different from each other. It is difficult to compare the world of *sammuti* which has mundane conventions, with what has not—which is *vimutti*. Buddhism has the purpose of teaching us how to make our *citta* pure, so that we can experience the sublime happiness of *vimutti*.

Q7 W3: Yesterday Ven. Paññāvaḍḍho said that we must use energy in practising meditation. Today you are talking about recollecting, which concerns the brain. I understand then that *citta* means energy and brain—is that correct?

Ven. Paññāvaḍḍho to Ajaan Mahā Boowa (in Thai): Two or three days ago I explained that we must use energy in meditation practice. I also explained that when

we are too intense the mind will be in turmoil, and that we must make a mental note of it.

A: In learning about and practising the Dhamma of the Buddha, we must gradually use more and more mindfulness and wisdom from the very first stage of the training until we reach the level of super-mindfulness (*mahā-sati*). We study and practise meditation because we want to make the *citta* calm, for the peaceful *citta* is of great worth. It's like when we wake up from a deep sleep—the *citta* is bright. But when we do not sleep soundly, or sleep badly and dream and talk in our sleep, then we wake up feeling dull and sleepy. In sound sleep, the *citta* drops into the state of *bhavanga* (a state that the *citta* reverts to when undisturbed), the place of deep sleep, where dreaming does not occur. After deep sleep, the aggregates are rested and energetic and the *citta* is cheerful.

By entering *samādhi*, the *citta* can become completely still and quiet. The heart is then always naturally happy and strong so that in reading, thinking or doing other jobs, the *citta* will be clear and relaxed. When thinking, it will be able to see through things more clearly than usual. Therefore, training the *citta* by way of either *samādhi* or wisdom in accordance with the principles of Buddhism is a good way to help us in our work. Contrary to what people generally understand, it does no harm to our livelihood. Those who think that it does are only nominally believers and know nothing about Buddhism.

Therefore, in striving with perseverance so as to get results, we must use diligence and determination, but these must be used differently in different cases. If we want to attain calm we must use determination to aim for a single spot; in other words, we must quell mental distractions. But if we are going to contemplate so as to know the Dhamma truths, we must use hard work and determination in observing and develop understanding in the Dhamma from various viewpoints. When we are aiming for the arising of wisdom, we must use hard work and determination in the investigation of causes and their effects in various ways.

Q8 W4: If we are tired from working so that the mind is very distracted and dull, should we sleep or should we practice meditation?

A: You should sleep, but this depends on circumstances. If it will help the *citta* to be calm and help you to sleep well, then you should also practise meditation. When you practise meditation until sleep comes, then the *citta* will be peaceful and the body can rest. So you should not stop using your usual method of practice if there is enough time to do it.

Third Meeting

Tuesday, June 11th, 1974

Questions and Answers

Q1 W1: I have read one of your books and came across the terms *citta-vimutti* and *Buddha-vimutti*. What do they mean?

A: *Citta-vimutti* is the term generally used for whatever *citta* has freed itself from the *kilesas* and become *Arahant*. *Buddha-vimutti* is the term which is used only in referring to the *citta* of the Buddha. They both mean that the *citta* is pure.

Q2 W1: I have read in a book that there are six consciousnesses (*viññāṇa*), that is, contact of the six external sense-objects (*āyatana*) with the six internal sense-bases (*āyatana*), and that there is also a seventh consciousness. What is this other one?

A: The six consciousnesses are the six external sense-objects coming in contact with eyes, ears, nose, etc., and then "knowing"—in other words, one knows that this or that thing has come in contact—this is the characteristic of the *citta*. The

seventh consciousness is *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, which does not become aware of anything, but takes birth (*paṭisandhi*) in a plane which is high or low, at such-and-such a time and place, depending on the causes which lead it on which are in the *citta*. There is therefore a new birth, or re-birth.

The Buddha taught us about the six consciousnesses so that we would not cling to things which we see and know, and so that we would know that they just arise and fall away, there being no permanent essence in them. When we can supervise them, we will be able to see the seventh *viññāṇa* more clearly. There is only one form of this consciousness, and it is *eka-viññāṇa*. To make an analogy, it is like the trunk of a tree and this is the part that matters when we want to make use of a tree. The other six consciousnesses are then like the branches and twigs which we cannot make much use of. We should therefore keep this in mind and take an interest in contemplating the one *citta* (*eka-citta*) which will take birth. We should also try to look after the *citta* and make it clean, and raise it as high as we can in accordance with our own level which we have gained from doing practice.

Q3 M1: *Viññāṇa* means "one who knows" and *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* means the *citta* which is covered with both wholesomeness and unwholesomeness (*kusala* and *akusala*), and which takes rebirth. So to make an analogy: when you build a house, it is better to be interested in the most important part of the house, rather than the little insignificant things outside. Is looking at it in this way correct?

A: That is correct. But you must contemplate the things that are connected with the *citta* until you understand them, and then let go of them. Contemplate them in conjunction with the *citta* which is the chief—the important one—until you understand both those things that are small and those that are great. Then contemplate all around in all aspects.

Q4 M2: The *citta* is the one that knows generally when we think about this or that, bringing these things together as *sankhāras* (compounded things) which are *anicca* (impermanent). But yesterday you said that the *citta* exists, that it is permanent. Would you please explain more about this?

A: In general, the *citta* of the ordinary person is impermanent, and it is permeated with mundane conventions. All things in the world which are mundane naturally come under the three characteristics of existence, which are impermanence (*anicca*), discontent (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anattā*). The *citta* of the ordinary person still comes in this category; that is, it must change according to what is wholesome and unwholesome which leads to rebirth. The *citta* that does not change—which is permanent—is the *citta* which is pure, which has attained to the state of *Arahantship*. It no longer has impermanence, discontent and not-self permeating it like the *citta* of the ordinary person.

An explanation such as this is theoretical knowledge (*pariyatti*), and it might lead to endless arguments if you have not practised. So talking about it and discussing it will not bring much benefit. If you practice and come to see the truth of Dhamma for yourself, reading, listening and discussing will lead to understanding. But if you have not practised accordingly, it will just go in the direction of argument. The Dhamma of the Lord Buddha has levels which are gross, middle or subtle, and it is always better to speak about those things which have value.

What can be obtained from reading and what can be obtained from practice are quite different from each other, because remembering what we have read is quite different from the truth that has been experienced from practice. Even when other people speak of the results from their practice, it is difficult for us to understand them until we have practised and experienced more with our hearts. Then our doubts will clear up by themselves.

Q5 M2: Is there any way to eradicate anger from oneself?

A: In the *Abhidhamma*, it is said that anger is the *dosa* root. If I explain it to you, you will understand my explanation well enough, but actually getting rid of the root of anger is very difficult. You must rely on practice as the main thing because extracting the *kilesas* must be done by means of the truth which comes from true practice. You cannot extract them with what comes from your ability to remember what you have learned—which can be remembered well enough by anybody who studies—for the *kilesas* are not afraid of this. They will still be there as they were before.

Regardless of what type of temperament we have, when we practise in order to eliminate the *kilesas*, we can surely get rid of them. In truth, there were and still are *Arahants* who were once very angry men. We ordinary people merely know and understand this, but we do not yet have the ability to eliminate the root of anger. We must train the *citta* to know what a bad fault hatred (*dosa*) really is, then it will go away by itself. If we try to get rid of it by just wanting it to go, we will not succeed. We must depend on meditation practice. Then we will see results coming steadily, which is called the right kind of meditation that is suitable for the removal of this kind of *kilesa*.

Please understand that the *kilesas* are not afraid of simply remembering their names. Even though we remember everything about them in great detail, they still remain *kilesas* which govern the hearts of beings in the world. They do not think about removing themselves to another place, unless one practises meditation and develops mindfulness and wisdom so as to be bold and strong enough to be able to drive them out. Then the time comes when they will break and scatter from the heart without any doubt. The Buddha and all his disciples eliminated the *kilesas* by means of practice. The methods they used have been taught to the world down to the present day.

I will explain sitting meditation. Why did the Buddha sit cross-legged in meditation? Looked at superficially, sitting in that position is not very important, so you

can sit in any position that you want. But if you are going to sit for hours, then you should sit cross-legged because the pressure due to the weight of the body will be evenly distributed. When it becomes painful, the pain will be spread out and it will not be excessively painful in any one spot. If you sit for a very long time, then it may become very painful. Since sitting in meditation is extremely important work for those who are determined to get real results, they may sit for a long time, even for many hours. If you become too worried or anxious about your body, then the *citta* will be weak. This will depend on the amount of *dukkha* experienced in the body.

It is important to make the *citta* one's goal. Let the *citta* do the work that is set for it, and have mindfulness in control of the *citta* while meditating so that it does not wander outside thinking about this or that. The *citta* that is always controlled by mindfulness will remain with oneself. It will be calm and clearly aware. The more you have mindfulness with the *citta*, the clearer the *citta* will be. You must therefore not allow the *citta* to wander, or to be distracted.

Q6 M3: A meditation teacher by the name of Alakamala has said that if we fix the *citta* into a thing, we cannot attain to *vimutti*. Why is this?

A: Because things are things, not *vimutti*. How can the *citta* then reach *vimutti*? We contemplate things not to get them, but to know them and to let go of them.

Concerning the Path of the *Arahant* (*Arahattamagga*) and the Fruition (*Arahattaphala*), and speaking of mindfulness and wisdom as well, if you make use of only mindfulness and do not make use of wisdom, you will not get results that are desirable. If you want to be able to eliminate the *kilesas* entirely, you must make complete use of mindfulness and wisdom—which are like tools. In making use of tools, you must know what to use with what, the way to use them and how. Although there may be a lot of mindfulness present, people may still be deficient in doing what is their duty because they do not use wisdom as they ought to. The

end result of this is that the full state that should arise does not. Being deficient in what is your duty is not a good thing, so the result you get is not complete. Therefore, one who learns about the Middle Way should always take into consideration what is sufficient—and thus appropriate to Dhamma—which is the Middle Way that you have learnt.

Q7 M3: Must we practise meditation to get a balance?

A: Practise meditation and see for yourself what is lacking. You should also develop the five *indriya* (faculties): *saddhā* (faith or confidence), *viriya* (energy), *sati* (mindfulness), *samādhi* (concentration) and *paññā* (wisdom) within oneself. When light falls on the surface of an object, the top of that object is illuminated while its underside is in shadow and dark. Wisdom is like the light which can truly penetrate everywhere, but what it penetrates is the *kilesas* which cover the heart, so that there is not any shadow in the heart where *kilesas* can hide or conceal themselves. This means that wisdom is powerful and able to investigate circumspectly throughout the darkness of all the *kilesas* with ease and confidence until the *citta* has reached ultimate *vimutti* (liberation).

Q8 (Ven. Paññāvaḍḍho): Does this mean that we should carefully examine the five *indriya*? If wisdom is strong it will penetrate throughout, like a light which shines completely through an object from top to bottom so that there is no shadow, which is *avijjā* (ignorance), left at all. Is that correct?

A: *Citta-vimutti* is the completely pure *citta* that has no shadow, for it is bright in all respects. If some shadow still remains, one can call that shadow *avijjā*. The important thing is: for the *citta* to become pure, all the *kilesas* must be completely eradicated.

Q9 W2: I would like to know what the *citta* is?

A: The *citta* is 'the one who knows'. The true *citta* has only one function, and that is 'knowing'. The Buddha always said that the original true *citta* is clear, bright, and resplendent, but the *kilesas* are mixed or blended with it and so that it follows the way of the *kilesas*, becoming murky. We must rely on mindfulness, wisdom and perseverance to cleanse the *citta*. When the *citta* has gone beyond the state of clarity and brightness it will be pure, which means that it will have attained to the state of *vimutti*.

The word "brightness" (*pabhassara*) refers here to the state of *vaṭṭa-citta* which is different from *vivaṭṭa-citta*. In other words, *pabhassara* is clarity and brightness, but is not yet the state of purity. The brightness which comes from meditation practice is due to the *kilesas* gathering together in just one spot. When the brightness, which is the most subtle aspect of the *kilesas*, has been passed beyond (overcome) by the cleansing process of super-mindfulness (*mahā-sati*) and super-wisdom (*mahā-paññā*), then the *citta* is pure.

Q10 M4: How does one guard the *citta* so as to keep it inside oneself?

A: If we want to know about the *citta*, we must practise meditation to make the *citta* calm. Wisdom can be made use of both internally and externally; but if wisdom is to arise and be astute, the *citta* must be calm. If the *citta* is calm, then we can know its characteristics. We should try to maintain the calm of the *citta* for as long as possible. Then we will build a firm basis for ourselves and become so skilled that we will be able to make the *citta* calm whenever we want. When the calm *citta* becomes continually brighter and brighter, it will know what *kilesas* are present, and it will have wisdom to extract and eliminate them. The *citta* will then become still brighter until it can drive out the *kilesas* by means of wisdom. This is the first step.

The 'knowing' that is formed from the *kilesas* is not the real *citta*, but only a characteristic of the *citta*. *Kilesas* can be coarse, medium or subtle in nature. We must use wisdom to follow and remove the *kilesas* of all three levels. When we have done this until the *citta* does not change, is not sad or downhearted, and has none of the characteristics of a *citta* covered in *kilesas* at all, this *citta* will know that there are no causes left for rebirth in the future. The *citta* is then pure and need not take birth again.

The *citta* that has the seeds of goodness and badness within it can be compared to a seed which can grow because it has the germ of life or the potential for development in it. This kind of *citta* will therefore be born, die, and be born again and again according to the causes which it has itself made—both good and bad. As for the *citta* that is pure, it is constant (unchanging) and the germ of rebirth is no longer present.

Regardless of whether you believe that after death there is nothing more, or that after death there is still something, if the *citta* has the seeds of goodness and badness present in it, it will be born again endlessly. But if the *citta* is pure and has no such seeds, it will not be reborn. This is the way of it. But the permanence (unchangingness) of the pure *citta* is not the same permanence that the world understands, so nobody can understand the permanence of the pure *citta* correctly, except the *Arahants*.

The Buddha practised until he saw truly for himself. He did not make any wild guesses or just think about it as we do. Therefore, the Buddha's Dhamma is absolutely correct and we can have absolute confidence in it.

If we cannot yet attain to the level of the pure *citta*, then we should persist in doing what is good so that in whatever way the *citta* is reborn it may be in a good way. This will lead to development, and is far better than clinging to doubt and uncertainty which so obstructs our way that we live in vain without gaining any-

thing useful. In that case, we will be swept away or pushed down into a huge mass of *dukkha*.

Q11 M5: Must we be born as human beings in order to attain Enlightenment?

A: Other beings do not have mindfulness and wisdom. Human beings have a lot of mindfulness and wisdom, but they must also have more than a normal amount of perseverance and energy before they can be enlightened. Therefore, not all human beings are able to attain Enlightenment. Those who are born in the five Pure Abodes of the *Brahma* world will be able to attain the highest level of Dhamma with much greater certainty than the majority of human beings. If human beings do not make an effort to do good, they are likely to do things which bring them to a lower level. There are four groups of human beings (which can be compared to four lotuses):

1. The group of people who are full of good characteristics, and will soon attain Enlightenment when they get the right method of Dhamma.
2. The second group will attain Dhamma gradually. They can be compared to those who are sick but who will be cured if given the proper medicine.
3. The third group needs to be taught many, many times before understanding occurs. They must practise regularly in order to be able to attain. If this group is compared to a sick patient: there is a way for him to be cured if he comes by the right medicine, and there is a way in which he can die if he is careless and likes to eat those things that are harmful for him because they nullify the medicine's cure.
4. The last group is least in everything that is good. If it is for the sake of evil, they will fight to their last breath without giving up. Because they are blind to everything, they are not afraid of accumulating *dukkha*.

The *citta* is like all other things—trees, children, etc: it needs nourishment so that it will grow and develop. The *citta* has to depend on its owner for the way it is nourished, so it will develop accordingly.

Ajaan Mahā Boowa's Talk

I AM VERY PLEASED to be able to come here and answer your questions, but I am afraid that my stay here will be rather short. I cannot remain very long due to the many duties which I have waiting for me in Thailand. Thailand is about 80 – 90% Buddhist and I have much to do in the way of meeting people and teaching my followers. It was necessary for me to prepare my work about three or four months in advance before I could actually come to England, and it is necessary that I return home quickly because many people are waiting for me there. I am very pleased to have been received by my English brothers and sisters, and I would like to come to England again. But *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* make it impossible for us to be sure that we will have the opportunity of doing so. I hope that the Dhamma we have discussed today will enable you to get the important essence (*sāra*) which will help you in your future practice.

Ven. Paññāvaḍḍho has been in Thailand for twelve years, so he speaks and understands Thai fluently. During that time I have tried to learn English from him, but I never really succeeded in learning it, so I am unable to speak to you in English during my stay here. I must have Ven. Paññāvaḍḍho translate for me.

Q12 M3: You have had a chance to see the city of London, to see that it is a large and bustling city. I would like to ask if people can practise meditation in a city like London?

A: Only the dead cannot practise meditation. As long as we are still alive, we will have the opportunity to practise meditation because we will have both times when we are busy and times when we are free.

We are not burdened all the time. In speaking about human cities or countries, all of them are cities or countries of people who have mouths and stomachs. So they have to run about busily finding remedies which they need for making up the deficiencies in their bodily well-being. Because of that, there is bound to be restless confusion and milling about in the same way everywhere. No matter what town or country we go to, they are all running around busily in the same way all over the world, because making a living compels them to be like that. The only place where things are not busy is in a graveyard, the towns of the dead. But who would want to live in an un-busy place like that?! Even animals do not want to go there. Therefore, when we need to live in a bustling city like London, we must bear it, because necessity forces us to do so. We see this happening everywhere in the world where men and animals with mouths to feed struggle to survive.

Fourth Meeting

Wednesday, June 12th, 1974

Questions and Answers

Q1 M1: Yesterday you said that it is difficult to get rid of anger. You said that you would speak about it so that we could understand it better. Please would you explain it further today?

A: Try to see the fault of anger, then you will be able to drive it away. When other people show that they are angry with you, you do not like it and you see it as bad; and when you are angry with others your behaviour and attitude are bad, so the results are also bad. But it is probable that you yourself will not feel that your anger is bad.

Usually if you know that something is bad and dangerous to yourself, in the future you will not do it; but if you think that it is good, or if you do not consider the fault of it and go on doing it because you give way to the emotion of anger, you will not be able to get rid of the anger. In fact, this will only increase your anger and

make it stronger so that it will constantly harass you and bring trouble and harm to others.

Q2 M2: Sometimes, is it not appropriate for us to show some anger?

A: Anger is 'hot', but people tend to think that it is good and so like to display it. If somebody does something against your wishes, you become angry. If you do not control your emotions, they get stronger and stronger. Have you ever felt that you get angry with yourself because you do something which does not keep up with the speed of your own mind? The feeling of anger makes you troubled (hot), not calm and cool, and the characteristics that display anger are not pleasant to see. Letting go and allowing anger to arise continually without in any way trying to quell it or get rid of it leads to it becoming part of your character. When this tendency keeps increasing, from where will you get peace of mind? If anger were beneficial and could be used like fertiliser for a tree, you should be angry only when you want to fertilise the tree. But since you cannot control anger and use it like a fertilizer, it is not appropriate to display it at all.

Q3 M2: If we have been treated unjustly—for instance, if we are blamed when we have done nothing wrong—what should we do?

A: You should act appropriately with reason. The Lord said that to act in any way which is led by greed, hate or delusion is bad. If you release your mad emotions and do harm to others when they accuse you wrongly, then having been good you will also become bad—which is a bad thing for all people who are concerned about virtue. If you want to be a good person you must hold back and refrain from anger. Search and think out a way that is suitable for you to act towards whoever has done wrong to you, without venting your anger and acting in such a way that you become a bad person, like the person who has done wrong to you.

Q4 M2: If we are angry and do not show it, the other person may not be aware that we are angry. Shouldn't we react to what they are doing with a show of anger so that they do not act in that way again?

A: Displaying anger is not a good thing, so you should think out and look for a good way of talking together in terms of causes and effects—then you can attain valuable results without arousing anything blameworthy following from the initial trouble. If there is discussion without the emotion of anger, you do not bring madness into your speech, so the other party is likely to understand and be able to accept and agree willingly to do what you want. The incident will then improve and not flare up and get worse—like using clean water to wash dirty things—you can wash them clean instead of making them more and more dirty. Displaying a demonic face, as you mentioned, is not a proper human attitude, because you become demonic as well.

Q5 M3: If we do not show any reaction, how will we be able to restrain ourselves?

A: If you restrain your heart you can restrain yourself. But generally people do not restrain themselves because they like to release their emotions. Scarcely anybody is interested in patiently restraining their own anger.

You must examine yourself like this: "What is it that I like or dislike? What the other person does to me makes me angry, but I restrain myself and do not display any abnormal behaviour. Investigating the way they feel so as to find out if I have done anything that would make them angry, I cannot recall anything that I may have done wrong. Perhaps they are in the wrong, but I am not. They make a show of anger, but I do not; their heart is troubled (hot) within them, and other people will see for themselves that they are bad, but I do nothing bad." Because you do not show any reaction by answering them back, you increasingly become an admirable person. Nobody admires a person who gets angry, saying that he is good because

he is clever at getting angry. When you get angry with someone, who is going to admire this and say that you are good because you can get angry with this or that person? Anger is not a good thing, so people everywhere in the world are afraid of it and tired of it. Even animals recognize anger and quickly try to avoid it or hide from it. They are afraid of anger which is a poison more harmful than fire. Anger should therefore not be encouraged—in fact, you should look for a way to quench it until there is none left.

Q6 W1: Why is it that when we meet certain people for the first time, we immediately feel that we like them or dislike them, even though they have not yet done anything to us?

A: Anyone who is not dead is likely to have such feelings. Therefore, it is normal to have feelings of liking or disliking when you see people, and there is nothing harmful in this. The nature of people throughout the world who have *kilesas* is usually like this. As long as you do not show it outwardly, it will be almost as if nothing has happened.

Q7 M2: Is it better to immediately throw off the dislike for someone, or to develop friendly feelings (*mettā*) towards them?

A: If you can throw off the dislike, this is good; or if you can develop *mettā* towards them, that is also good. But generally people do neither, for they go and do things that they should not do. When you feel anger and dislike for someone, if you see the fault is within yourself because it makes you feel uneasy in your heart, you can get rid of that angry feeling entirely. So, to go straight to the point, you must before all else examine your own faults, both the ones that have occurred in the past and those that are present now, in order to get rid of your feelings of anger towards others.

At first, when you begin to practise this form of Dhamma you do not understand yourself. You have only feelings about external things and your likes and dislikes of them. When you begin to observe other people, you see how people display the characteristics of anger, and you don't like it. So you try not to display such characteristics towards other people. Acting in this way, you begin to understand your own *citta*. Doing this often, your awareness of yourself and your *citta* will also arise more quickly. Then, as soon as you are the recipient of someone else's display of anger, in whatever way it may come about, you know yourself and you can quell your emotions. In this way, you can get rid of your defilements (*kilesas*) little by little, and reduce the *dukkha* and anxiety in your own heart.

Dissatisfaction with people is nothing but *dukkha*, which accords with the Dhamma that the Lord taught. But mostly we oppose Dhamma—which is right, good and proper—so we generally find *dukkha* all the time without feeling any dread of it, which leads us to encounter *dukkha* again and again.

Q8 W2: How should we correct the anxiety and agitation that we experience due to an excessive concern for other people?

A: Whatever you do or feel excessively is bad, so it is a cause of *dukkha*. If you are responsible for someone in a given situation, you should consider it circumspectly, trying to anticipate and correct any problems which may arise. Normally if you do not think beyond what is happening in the present, it will be enough to keep you calm and prevent excessive agitation or anxiety from occurring. The word 'excessive' should be understood to mean 'that which is beyond what is sufficient', and this always causes nothing but *dukkha*. Those who like to consider the basic meaning of Dhamma should always be aware of this.

Q9 M3: When dislike arises, should we use the same method to get rid of it that you said should be used to get rid of anger?

A: Yes, do it by whatever method gets rid of the disliking. Whichever method works, it will probably be correct for this purpose.

Q10 W3: In doing *samādhi* practice by walking *caṅkama*, how should we go about doing it correctly?

A: Tan Ajaan Mun suggested that there are three factors which should be adhered to:

1. Walk from east to west, or walk at an angle to the east-west line (so that the sun does not get in your eyes).
2. Once you set the *citta* to do the work of meditation, then watch the *citta* to make sure that it does only that work, and so prevent it from getting distracted and going elsewhere. You must look on that work as being the object of your attention (*ārammaṇa*). For example, one method is to take the raising and lowering of your feet as the object. In that case, you must do just this method, because this is the work that you have set the *citta* to do. If you prefer another method, fix your attention on the corresponding object of that method.
3. When contemplating Dhamma, you should continue until you reach the end of that aspect of Dhamma that you are contemplating, making sure to have mindfulness associated with it in every bodily action and position.

The various methods of practising Dhamma do not in fact conflict with each other. But the person who practises is likely to be prejudiced and see his own method as being right while other people's methods have no value. So disagreements arise when one person claims: "It is better to do it my way". Another person taking up that method may find it unsuitable to him because it is wrong and unsatisfactory

for his temperament. When you take up and practise a method that other people have practised with successful results, it can happen that you gain no good results for yourself. Therefore, the practice of Dhamma depends upon individual characteristics (*upanissaya*), for one person will prefer this method and another will prefer that method.

Q11 M2: If we have used one method for a long time and later on someone comes and recommends another method, should we continue using our old method or not?

A: If you have gained skill at using any given method, and if you are satisfied that you have gained the result of a calm and peaceful heart, you should go on using that method. The Dhamma object (*ārammaṇa dhamma*) used in meditation may eventually change as the *citta* becomes more aware of itself. But to begin with, you must give the heart a basis to hold on to so that the *citta* becomes calm. Later on you may change the method you use, but the method that initially gave you good results is important, so you should hold on to it as the basis of your practice. You must not vacillate back and forth, listening readily and believing easily when someone says that this or that method is better, and following what they say even though you get no satisfactory results.

Q12 M4: The method of paying attention to the feeling of rising and falling of the abdomen as I breathe in and out gives rise to strange feelings. Why is this?

A: If the *citta* is firmly paying attention to the rising and falling of the abdomen, there is nothing to arouse such strange feelings. But when the *citta* is off guard, it drifts away and gets involved with various distractions. You must make the *citta* return to the original object of attention and do only the work associated with that object. If you release the *citta*, letting it go continually wherever it likes, it will

never stop deceiving you in all sorts of ways. Finally, you will be unable to find any firm basis or anchor for the *citta*, so its foundation will become unstable.

Q13 W4: When doing *ānāpānasati*, I keep my attention on the breath going in and out. But if I hear a sound from outside, the watching of the breath gets lost. I was told that if I heard any sound I should think, "hearing, hearing" and then go on doing the practice. But I feel that it is difficult for me to enter *samādhi*.

A: The method that you mentioned first is good, and there is no need to increase the burden more than necessary. In other words, get the *citta* to stay with the in-and-out breathing.

For the latter part of your question: the burden of the *citta* is increased when, as soon as a sound is heard, the *citta* must "know, know" and then return to set up the practice as before. When something breaks into the practice often, your *citta* will be too slow to keep up, so it will never be able to continue with the work that it should be doing. When you are a beginner at meditation, the *citta* does not yet have much strength, so to greatly increase the burden of the *citta* is not good. It is like getting a child to do work that must be gradually explained in each of its aspects. If you explain how to do too much of it all at once, the work will become too difficult. Then laziness will arise, causing the child to dawdle over the work. The *citta* is much like this.

Q14 W2: Can we contemplate parts of the body while walking *caṅkama*?

A: To begin with, you want to get the heart calm. When the heart has attained a state of calm and then withdrawn from that calm state, you can focus the *citta* to contemplate and develop understanding step by step. The nature of the contemplation may take the *citta* away from that calm state, but at that point you must

not be anxious about whether the *citta* is calm or not; simply press on further with the contemplation.

The work of the *citta* is done firstly for the attainment of calm and secondly for the elimination of the inner defilements (*kilesas*). Mindfulness—the faculty that controls the contemplation—is just as essential when contemplating to gain understanding about parts of the body, as it is when doing *samādhi* practice to attain calm. In both cases, mindfulness must be present to supervise the work all the time.

Q15 W2: What do you mean by contemplation?

A: Contemplation means continually investigating internally and externally for the purpose of getting rid of the defilements. It is the aspect of *citta bhāvāna* called *vipassanā* (insight). Once you become skilled in contemplation, enthusiasm for doing the contemplation arises by itself. After doing *vipassanā* for a long time, you will have to turn from it to rest the *citta*, making the *citta* calm by dwelling in *samādhi* for a while. So first you must practise *samādhi* for calming the *citta* until you become skilled at it so as to increase the strength of the *citta* enough to practise 'knowing with insight' (*vipassanā ñāṇa*). After practising *vipassanā* for some time, you must use *samādhi* as the method of resting the *citta* so that you can continue the contemplation until super-mindfulness (*mahā-sati*) and super-wisdom (*mahā-paññā*) arise.

The *citta* will then have courage and ability along with mindfulness and wisdom to get rid of the defilements—and these factors make up *Magga* (the Path). Having reached this stage, all laziness will disappear, allowing you to do *citta bhāvāna* until you forget all about time. Then you will be able to sit for long periods and attain results that are of high value. After sitting for a long time, you should then meditate while walking, as a means of changing your posture. In this way, you use super-mindfulness and super-wisdom to go on curing doubts and problems until

there are no more defilements left to cure. You will understand by yourself when the *citta* and Dhamma have penetrated each other. This is how the way of practice can help to arouse knowledge and understanding of the *citta*.

The *citta* is the very essence of a person. The *citta* is what causes us to be born as human beings, with circumstances that are good or bad, high or low. Since the *citta* is the chief cause, we must rely upon those things which influence the *citta* for our future state. If we develop the *citta* well, we can rise up until we reach the stage of *sugato*—one who has great happiness. But if the *citta* accumulates bad things, even without knowing that they are bad, the results which one gets will be bad all the time.

When we practise Dhamma well, a sense of well-being will arise in our hearts. Usually we do not know the reason why we receive *dukkha*, or when we will be free from it, because we are not aware that we have done bad things, or when we did them. We just see the results of them which arise as *dukkha* at the present moment.

We should always try to choose the work that the *citta* does. Evil and *akusala* should be completely avoided. If we are used to doing bad things, we must try to find a way to abstain from doing them, and also find a way to promote what has value and what is good, even though it may be difficult to do. Using wisdom to drive us on, we gradually train ourselves like this until we become used to it. But lazy people and those who do not like what is good are no use at all because they have no wisdom to drive them on.

When people love what is good, wisdom compels them to do good until the *citta* is used to it. Then results of calm, peace and happiness will come. It may also happen that something strange and wonderful of a different kind arises spontaneously in the *citta*. We are not normally acquainted with such wonderful things, but they will arise from the practice of what is good—the important thing is the practice of *citta bhāvāna*.

As for the above good person, he has only virtue. He is not distracted and he is not at cross-purposes with Dhamma, with other people, or with anything else in the world. But the person who does not yet have the power to control his mind and make his thoughts, speech and actions always go in the right direction—the direction in which they should go, which leads to those results that bring happiness—must purify and cure his *citta* using the methods of meditation practice that cause the bad things within him to disintegrate. Those things which are dignified and noble will then develop and increase in his heart, which by way of nature has a very high value.

If you practise following the way that the Lord Buddha taught, you will become a wise person. Then, when you train your *citta*, you will understand the nature of your own *citta* better than anyone else. But if you practise following the way of someone who does not truly know, it will be like the blind foolishly leading the blind—you will be unable to walk the right way to reach your desired goal. If you are not prepared to let yourself be led by someone who truly does knows the way, then the more you act in that way, the more stupid you become, so you will fail to see the good results that you expect.

Cleverness must depend on mindfulness and wisdom to look for reasons and results. People in this world do not become good on their own without making any effort; they must rely upon learning and they must have training in meditation. Training raises the *citta* to a higher level. If you lack training, your *citta* cannot go higher because the defilements will pull the *citta* down until it cannot escape. But the well-trained *citta* can get rid of the *kilesas* and be transformed into something of the highest value.

Fifth Meeting

Thursday, June 13th, 1974

Meeting at Cambridge (morning)

Q1 W1: I used to practise Zen meditation (*samādhi*). I was told to count my breaths from one to ten, back and forth. I was then given a Koan, the word "Mu", which means "empty". I was told to concentrate on the stomach region, on the blood in the stomach and to let the *citta* spread out into the stomach. As soon as I did this a little, I felt tense in the face, eyes and head, which caused me to get headaches. While sitting in meditation, there was a lot of noise of the beating of drums and gongs. I tried to relax the body but I couldn't, and now I only have to think about sitting in meditation and I get a headache. I would like to know why this happened.

A: Before you began to feel tense in the face and head, was your *citta* focused on the noise or at the stomach?

W1: It was fixed at the stomach because I had to meditate on "Mu" and then concentrate my energy to go down into the stomach.

A: What happened concerns a reaction that takes place in the physical body. I understand that you were too determined in doing that practice, so you disturbed the body, as if you were having a fight with it. You should ask your teacher, who taught you to arouse such an obstacle, how you should cure it.

W1: The teacher would only help while I was staying at the monastery. Having left the monastery, he does not contact his followers by letter. I have now turned to the practice of *ānāpānasati*.

A: You must persist in investigating to search for the reasons why this occurs, and change the method (of practice) to whatever is shown by those reasons to be suitable to keep the *citta* constantly in the present; this may be the way to cure it.

Q2 M1: What is mindfulness (*sati*)?

A: When taking hold of anything, you must know that you take hold of it. This is mindfulness.

Q3 M2: In school, my teachers ask what Buddhism teaches about the creation of the world.

A: Buddhism teaches people to cure their problems, and so reduce their *dukkha* stage by stage. This means progressing one step at a time. When you enter a house, you first of all open the door; you don't tear the whole house down to get in. Or again, when children begin school, they learn step by step, class by class, so they go higher and higher gradually. But if you try to teach children who are just starting school about things that are far above their heads, it has no use at all. Knowing about the creation of the world is useless in the same way.

Q4 M2: In taking the Triple Gem (*Ti-ratana*) as our refuge (*saraṇa*), I can understand sufficiently well where it says: "I take the Buddha…the Dhamma…" But in connection with *Saṅghaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi*, does this mean that we should take the Sangha here as our refuge? Since England still has no Sangha, what should we do?

A: *Buddhaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi* means to take all the Buddhas to be your refuge. *Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi* means to take the Dhamma that every Buddha taught to be your refuge. *Saṅghaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi* means to take the *Sāvaka Sangha* of every Buddha to be your refuge. The *Sāvaka Sangha* means those who are: *supaṭipanno*—who have practised well; *ujupaṭipanno*—who have practised correctly in accordance with the *Vinaya* that each Buddha laid down, without evading the rules of the *Vinaya*; *ñāyapaṭipanno*—who practised for the purpose of knowing clearly and seeing truly, and who let go of everything with *sāmīcipaṭipanno*—having practiced Dhamma in ways that are appropriate to Dhamma, and having practiced rightly those things that are the duty of a *Bhikkhu*. The Lord told us to take these as our refuge.

The Sangha nowadays that practises in the way described above may be taken as a refuge, because any Sangha that practises properly comes within the circle of the *Sāvaka Sangha*. The Lord said we can tell whether a true Sangha, that we can take to be a refuge, exists or not by seeing if it practises properly according to the above standard.

Q5 M2: In England it is very difficult to find the Sangha.

A: If one takes the Sangha as being that which has the characteristics mentioned above, then it is difficult to find in any country!

Q6 M2: Why must we speak in Pāli when the precepts are given?

A: When the Lord Buddha taught Buddhism he used the Pāli language, and it has meaning accordingly. But if you feel you understand the essential meaning, you can use any language to express it. If we agree that the 'language of the heart' is the important one because it is common to everyone, and if we consider that Pāli expresses the language of the heart, then when we speak a Pāli word, others who have different native languages can understand it in accordance with their own language and customs. This is good, isn't it?

Q7 M3: The laws of *kamma* and the laws of science are opposed to each other, are they not?

A: What do the laws of science say? I will speak first about *kamma*. *Kamma* is what people think, say or do, which is good or evil or between the two—neither good nor evil. Having acted, the result will follow—the result being good, evil or between the two respectively.

M3: Science is not concerned about good or evil or the future.

A: Can science cure craving? When we are hungry, we simply eat and become full. The way of Buddhism aims to cure the *dukkha* of craving, it aims to cure anything that causes suffering, from the lowest levels up to the most subtle.

Q8 W1: I now want to learn how to do *samādhi*. I want to know myself in a new way, but there is that obstacle which I mentioned before. How can I cure it?

A: I sympathise with you, but to tell you how to cure it is difficult because the way of practice differs from the way we normally do things. If a teacher teaches in a certain way and you follow and practise accordingly, how can you be sure that the way he teaches is the right way? You must search for the basic principles that can make you sure that the goal at the end of the path is the same as the one the Buddha taught.

A basic principle that I can give you, which is common to all ways, is: "Do not let your *citta* go out externally." When the *citta* focuses outside, it becomes fascinated by the things it experiences externally, so you must train yourself to refocus your *citta* internally and do this time after time. Things that appear to be external may in fact come from your own mind. If they are attractive things, you tend to like them. If they are loathsome things, and what's more important, frightening things, you will be afraid. So in order to guard against fear, you must look after the *citta* and keep it inside to arouse calm and peace of heart internally.

Q9 W1: Nowadays society is changing and our world has nothing but confusion and deterioration. How do you think it can be changed for the better?

A: That the world and society are changing is natural. Society is made up of the people in it. The people in each society must investigate and find out what is good and what is bad for their society, and how it should be corrected so that it will be right and proper. Someone outside that society does not have enough knowledge and understanding to think out how it should be changed.

Talk on Dhamma (evening)

We are interested in Buddhism because we are interested in learning about ourselves, those who are associated with us and our surrounding environment. Buddhism teaches us how we should act towards ourselves and towards those people and things. As for the *Sāsana* (the Buddhist religion), it is neutral, because the Lord Buddha bestowed the *Sāsana* impartially to all human beings, including us here. If we show no interest in Buddhism, it simply remains "unclaimed wealth".

But the *Sāsana* can become the wealth of people at each and every level depending on the interest they take in it. If people take the practice and the discipline and use them as food for the heart in the way which accords with the teaching of the Lord, the results will be impressive. The heart will become progressively calmer and cooler at each level of development.

So the *Sāsana* cannot be separated from us, for it is the path we must follow to find ourselves. For us the path is the thing that is necessary, and it must lead us in the right direction if we are to succeed. So we must be careful to study the path to see where it leads, because if we go in the wrong way we will waste a lot of time.

The way of Buddhism is the way of calm. It is *niyyānika dhamma*—"leading on" those who practise so that they can get free from *dukkha* in accordance with the level of their Dhamma basis (*bhūmi*) and *citta* basis. When people who are living in a state of confusion and discontentment, and who do not know how to get rid of those things which are unsatisfactory, have taken the *Sāsana* as their guide, their thinking and behaviour become correct and dignified. So the *Sāsana* is necessary for those who want what is correct and dignified.

The problems which concern us and the *Sāsana* are our own problems. In other words, we are bound to be born, to meet with *dukkha* and hardship, and to die. Our problem is: having been born, how should we act so as to be trouble-free and contented, without accumulating *dukkha* and trouble for ourselves—or making trouble for others and for society in general?

Death is something that nobody wants. This is because of a fear that we will be completely destroyed at death, or that we will experience *dukkha* and hardship after we die. But if we knew that after death we would experience ease and contentment, everyone would want to die now, because there are things we hope to get that have greater value than what exists here in this life. But if people are still not sure whether after death they will come to destruction, or to happiness and contentment, they do not want to die.

The principles of Dhamma stand unshakeably on their own. They are certain and can be accepted on faith. The speech of the Lord Buddha is correct and accurately spoken because it comes from the purity of his heart. The Lord Buddha knew for himself every aspect of Dhamma before he gave it as a teaching to others. He had practised and attained the fruits of it to his heart's content, and he taught with pure heart filled with compassion for all beings. Therefore the Dhamma is a Dhamma which gives hope to those who practise it fully. When we have practised it whole-heartedly, hope will become clearly apparent to us. Those who rightly practise Dhamma in their hearts, following the principles of Dhamma, can see the proper results appear in themselves with certainty.

Once you understand the principles of Dhamma that you have put into practice, your former knowledge, which was uneven and inconsistent, is all overthrown—or so it seems to the heart. Then, for as long as you live, you will never be afraid or timid because you know how you practised and how it gave results step by step. When this life ends, where you will be reborn and whether you will receive *sukha* or *dukkha* is already clear to you with no room for doubt. Therefore, one who practises following the way of the Lord Buddha can cut off all fear and doubt, so that there remains only the entire truth and a life full of happiness and contentment without any trouble.

Therefore, you should learn about your own problems so as to bring them to an end. Then the *Sāsana* will help to arouse hope in your future.

Questions and Answers

Q1 M1: I would like to know about the practice of Dhamma so that when I grow older I will not get troubled and agitated.

A: When we observe things along the road which we are traveling, we can gauge whether we are going the right way or the wrong way. Once we have decided which destination we are headed to, we should first of all learn the way to get there and then we go that way. When we go the right way, there are no problems.

Buddhism teaches us to avoid things that are dangerous. It teaches that the *citta* should have its own basis (foundation) so that it will not waver or be afraid, being doubtful about death and how things will go after death. Nor will it be interested in thinking about anything external to itself—which would be like "grasping at shadows".

If you are going to a place and you are not sure that you will find everything convenient there, you will probably prepare yourself and take all sorts of things that you might need so that you will have everything. Then you may be certain that everything will be convenient and that you will lack nothing.

When you are sure that you will find food there, plus you have also taken food along with you, you do not feel any apprehension. Virtue is comparable to food, for food is food of the body and virtue is food of the *citta*. The practice of Dhamma will produce the food for the *citta* which you carry along with you. Then the heart will be at ease so that whenever you die you will not experience *dukkha*.

We know that the body needs food, so we eat whatever type of food the body is lacking. The *citta* needs virtue and Dhamma. When it lacks this food, the factors of confusion arise, making the heart uneasy and troubled. We should therefore know where we are deficient and then hurry to correct it so that we accumulate virtue from now on.

You who have come here to search for what is good, which is food for the heart, should practise *samādhi* meditation. If you constantly do virtuous things, your *citta* will have skill, courage, goodness and certainty about the future. This is like someone going on a journey who has arranged everything that will be necessary for his use on the way.

We are going on a journey, coming from which state of existence we do not know, but we are human—which means we are people living now whether men or women. Since birth we have experienced *dukkha* and *sukha*, with difficulty and confusion, and we have gradually come to know this. We have learnt lessons from the events of our own past and we know one day in the future we are bound to die. After death how will it be? If we act so as to develop our *cittas* to attain complete clarity, this question can answer itself so that we have certainty, ease of heart and a feeling of confidence in ourselves.

Q2 M2: That method of practising *samādhi*—do you teach it for all people or are there different methods?

A: This teaching is a general method which whoever wants can start with. But when it has been really and truly practised, the results which each person gets will differ according to the level of the basic state of each *citta*. After that, a method will be suggested which is suitable to each individual's disposition (*cārita*), because there are many methods of doing *samādhi* to suit people's varying temperaments. Like medical treatments, which must suit the disease in order to cure it.

Q3 M3: When practising *samādhi*, is it important to have a teacher to advise us?

A: When the *citta* becomes more and more subtle, you increasingly need a teacher to explain whether any particular way is right or wrong. When practising *samādhi*, you will come to know new things which you have never known or seen before, which if indulged in will increase delusion. Therefore a teacher becomes increasingly necessary.

Q4 W1: Yesterday you spoke about training for *samādhi*, saying that we must also contemplate (investigate). How do we do this contemplation?

A: Contemplation analyses things into the various components that make them up. For example, your body is composed of various parts which make it up, and you must use wisdom to analyse them.

Q5 W1: Apart from contemplating the body, can we also contemplate other things?

A: Yes, you can—by contemplating from outside going inwards, or contemplating from inside going outwards—if you have understood the food of the body and of the heart.

Q6 M4: Are the methods of doing *samādhi* of Jesus Christ and the Lord Buddha the same or different and how?

A: Every true religion teaches people to be good. I do not dare to put Jesus and the Lord Buddha in the ring to have a boxing match to see who is champion, because the religions do not have anything to argue and fight about. But we people who are variously Christians and Buddhists like to quarrel and fight with words, because of being stubborn we do not practise the way of either religion. The teachings of the Founders of each religion give us a right path to follow, so we ought to contemplate the virtues of the Founders. It is as if we are walking along a path to a particular destination. At first we go along a path that we know until we reach a point where we do not know the way, so we ask someone who knows and they tell us the way to go further. As soon as we again reach a point of uncertainty, we ask again. We continue like this until we reach the goal at the end of the path. The one who points out the way is a benefactor to us, and we ought to reflect upon his gift to us.

The Lord Buddha saw clearly into Dhamma, because he understood clearly the method by which he had trained himself. Therefore, it was never in vain that Buddhists turned to him. He was always ready to help the world to get free from

various dangers with methods which were full of *mettā*. To summarise: in both religions, the Founders compassionately taught people to be good in the same way. They are different in their degrees of subtlety following the abilities of the Founders of each religion.

Q7 M5: Doing the repetition of "Buddho", must we do it just on its own or together with the in-and-out breaths?

A: It is up to each person to do it as he likes. It can be done in three ways:

1. Simply repeat "Buddho, Buddho…" etc., until the *citta* remains still with Buddho.
2. Repeat "Buddho…" in time with the in-and-out breaths.
3. Meditate "Bud" with the in-breaths and "dho" with the out-breaths.

It is important to depend on mindfulness to know and attend to the work that you have set your *citta* to do, and to avoid anticipating the results which you may get from doing the practice. When mindfulness and the work go along together, the result will come of itself steadily from the practice of meditation.

Q8 W2: Please would you explain about mindfulness in daily life?

A: Mindfulness is an aspect of Dhamma that is essential everywhere in all situations. It allows you to recollect and to know yourself all the time, whatever you are doing and wherever you are in all activities.

To what extent can we practice it? The Lord Buddha intended that we should have great spiritual wealth, but the extent to which we ourselves can have it depends upon the ability of each person. When you have mindfulness always with you and working all the time, then you can sit in *samādhi* in whatever way you like. But it is important that mindfulness keeps your attention on just the work that you are doing.

Sixth Meeting

Saturday, June 15th, 1974

AJAAN MAHĀ BOOWA GAVE the following talk:

In Buddhism the Lord revealed Dhamma in three categories. These are: 1) *Pariyatti*—this being the process of learning so as to gain knowledge and understanding in the methods of practice. 2) *Paṭipatti*—after studying the way, we turn to do the practices which the Lord taught. 3) *Paṭivedha*—that knowledge which is the successful result of the practice in which one knows clearly and penetratingly throughout. Unlike nowadays, when monks are taught to pass exams of grade 3, grade 2 and Pariyan, in the time of the Lord Buddha, the *Sāvakas* were not taught a great deal by the Lord. Instead, they learned by practising meditation. Those who knew the *Ti-pitaka* were many, but they got no diploma to boost their vanity, only knowledge and understanding that enabled them to go further and further in the practice. The Lord Buddha taught every *Sāvaka* to contemplate: hair of the head (*kesā*), hair of the body (*loma*), nails (*nakhā*), teeth (*danta*) and skin (*taco*), which are things that we all have in our bodies. But by ourselves we are incapable of realising that these things arise and cease continually, always changing in accordance with the truth of what they are. The Lord taught the *Sāvakas* about this so

that they would know the truth that these parts themselves display. When these things reveal themselves as having an unpleasant, repugnant nature, then discontent arises. But mostly people don't see this, so they grasp hold of the body and consider it to be a treasure that they must adorn, take care of and look after all the time. The Lord Buddha taught body contemplation so that we should not feel worried and anxious when the body starts to function abnormally and to wrong. *Kesā*, *loma*, *nakhā*, *danta* and *taco* have inherent within them the characteristics of continual change quite regardless of the status of our birth, social level or skin colour. Those who study them will get to know them truly because they are attached to our bodies. Birth, old age, change and uncertainty cause *dukkha* and hardship in the hearts of people. For that reason, the Lord Buddha taught every member of the *Sāvaka Sangha* the five *kammaṭṭhāna*, and then sent them off to the forest to study *kesā*, *loma*, *nakhā*, *danta* and *taco*, contemplating them one by one first in the forward order (*anuloma*) and then in the reverse order (*paṭiloma*). The *Sāvakas* went to practise in mountains, caves and cliffs—wherever it was convenient and peaceful for them to work—taking up these five *kammaṭṭhānas* as the basis for striving, until clear knowledge arose, of both the body and the *citta*. *Pariyatti* refers to what we learn from the Lord Buddha that enables us to get rid of stupidity and dullness in regard to those things which we have in our own bodies.

Paṭipatti refers to the practice of sitting in *samādhi*, walking *caṅkama*, and investigating the above five things, which are like a grindstone for sharpening wisdom to make it become keen and strong until it comes to know the truth about the body. When wisdom is practised correctly, skill and cleverness develop in the heart. Even *samādhi* develops, making the heart calm and cool. These are the results that come from practising correctly.

Paṭivedha refers to clear knowledge that penetrates into all the Dhamma truths (*Sacca dhammas*) until it reaches *vimutti*—total freedom.

All three of these factors are necessary in association with each other, so they cannot be separated out from the beginning of the path to the end. Those who intend to get results from Dhamma should practice all three without being deficient in any of them. Then the results will be clearly evident and always satisfying.

The Dhamma that the Lord Buddha taught has not changed from his time right up to the present time. We who practise should understand that this teaching gives us knowledge of how to practise in regard to the body and the *citta* at times when hatred, desire, anger and delusion arise. These things are sure to arise countless times in our lives, making us feel agitated and discontented. This happens because we are not circumspect and guarded in relation to the thoughts and imaginings of our minds. So we must learn to know which actions give rise to bad effects and which give rise to beneficial ones. The practice of Buddhism therefore is a way of meditation focused on our own minds for the purpose of developing calm and coolness inside. The more we practice Buddhism, the greater the benefits, which is appropriate for a religion that teaches people to be clever in guarding themselves so as to get free from danger.

Questions and Answers

Q1 M1: What you explained yesterday, about the *citta* being something that does not die, leads me to understand that the *citta* is the same as the soul. Please would you elaborate on this point a bit more.

A: What is the soul?

M1: The soul is the one that must associate with God. Each person has one soul. When a person dies, the soul waits for God to judge it, and is then sent to either heaven or hell.

A: *Citta*, or *mano-viññāṇa*, is the "one who knows". It is also referred to as the heart. As for *viññāṇa*, the consciousness which comes from the impact of sensation through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind, it arises in association with these things and then ceases. This is what is called *viññāṇa* in the five *khandhas*, and is different from the *citta*. But *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* (which comes under the first heading above) is the *citta* that goes to take birth each time in any one of various possible realms and characteristic forms of existence. The *citta* has "seeds" attached to it—in other words, *kamma* which has been done that can send it off to be born in various different states.

In Buddhism it is explained that beings are born in various different circumstances and states because of *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, the *citta* that has the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*. *Kamma* is the "force" which drives the *citta* on. But when the *citta* has been "washed clean" until it is made pure (*parisuddhi*), free from *kilesas* and *kamma* which would otherwise attach themselves to it, the pure *citta* knows within itself that it will not be born again. It knows without a doubt that it is free, that it is finally and absolutely beyond the rule of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*.

As long as the *citta*, or *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, is still not pure in every way, it must live under the rule of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā*. But this *citta* is very subtle, so how can it be *anattā*? It may be illustrated by the following simile, which gives a comparison with emptiness.

Suppose that a man is told to go into a room and say whether the room is empty or not. When he sees that here is nothing in the room, he says: "This room is empty". But the person who sent him in counters: "How can the room be empty when you are standing there in the middle of it?" He then becomes aware of himself and leaves the room. Only then is the room truly empty.

The *citta* which gets rid of *attānudiṭṭhi* (belief in self) entirely has nothing mundane or relative left in it at all. Therefore it is said to be an "empty *citta*", or a *citta* that is pure throughout. Since *attā* and *anattā* no longer exist in the *citta*, the *citta* is absolutely free from conditions of both *attā* and *anattā*.

Q2 W1: What is *dukkha*?

A: *Dukkha* exists in all living beings. Speaking from the standpoint of Dhamma, *dukkha* is the truth that everyone experiences. But our hearts do not see what the truth is, so we continually negate the true nature of *dukkha*. The deluded *citta* does not know the truth of *dukkha*, so when we search for a way to cure it we cannot find a cure for it by ourselves because we do not know the root cause of *dukkha*. Then *dukkha* becomes so much a part of us that we have *dukkha* all the time, regardless of whether we understand what it is or not.

As to your question: what is *dukkha*? Please examine *dukkha* carefully at those times when *dukkha* arises in you. *Dukkha* exists in everybody without exception, so who better to ask about *dukkha* than the one who experiences it? When you practise the way that the Lord Buddha taught, you will come to know these things. Buddhist practice is the only way to understand *dukkha* with certainty.

Q3 M2: What is "intuition"? For example, sometimes I have a problem and I cannot think out how to overcome it. Then I go to sleep and when I wake up the answer to the problem comes of itself, and it is the right way to overcome it.

A: This often happens to those who practice. But it's an internal experience, special to each individual, so it would not be right to talk about it to other people.

Q4 M3: *Saṁsāra* is "knowing", is it not? And *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* are "knowing", so when we dream it is the knowing itself that does the work.

A: In the circle of those who practise, to say that "*saṁsāra* is knowing" is right. When the *citta* is no longer deluded, it is this "knowing" that will be relinquished. But please be careful to use wisdom to contemplate until you are able to understand this clearly. Don't be too easily satisfied with your understanding, because it may lead you to go wrong later on. You must use wisdom here like a knife—you must use all sides of the knife to be effective. You must use the sharp side on yourself to cut out and get rid of your faults; and the back of the blade on other people. People usually use the sharp edge on other people, but when it comes to themselves they use the handle or the back of the blade.

Before you come to know that the *citta* is *saṁsāra*, wisdom will probably have to contemplate external things until it knows them clearly and lets go of them. Then it comes and sees the danger in the true ringleader of *saṁsāra*—which is the *citta*. When you see that the *citta* is *saṁsāra*, it is called "seeing in the reverse manner" (*paṭiloma*); in other words, turning back inwards to get to know yourself and ending all doubts at the same time. You must contemplate both internally and externally. Externally, there are natural phenomena in the surrounding environment, which are basically composed of earth, water, air and fire. Internally, there is the area within the *citta*. It is there that you should know what you must get rid of. Suppose a drinking glass falls and breaks—you must look and see it as it is. If you imagine that it's someone's fault that it fell and broke, you will be troubled and upset. But when you realise that it went its own way according to its nature, you free your heart entirely and there is no need to be upset about it. It is important for the *citta* to turn round like this and catch up with the *kilesas*.

Finally you will know the one who creates imagination—*sankhāra*—the one who creates all the stories. When seen with profound wisdom, the stories cease forthwith and no longer follow on from one another, building a series of thoughts branching out wider and wider.

Discussing the essence of Dhamma today has become more and more interesting for all of us. But there should also be something about practice.

What is practice? It is that which brings you good results by letting you know and see fully. When those who practise report to the teacher and tell each other of the results they have attained, they can correct their faults, which gives them clarity and confidence. Each person who practises gains results according to the basic nature (*bhūmi*) of his *citta* and his Dhamma, which differ from person to person. So the teacher has to give explanations continuously to encourage those who practice so that they can strengthen their resolve. He knows the results that he has attained for himself, and those that the pupil has attained by practising in the same way to be essentially the same. Because the teacher who knows clearly has already gone the whole way, he is able to talk the pupil into penetrating through and letting go of everything until the pupil also penetrates through and gains freedom. Buddhism is not *mogharāja* (a useless kingdom), but it is genuine and true and fully capable of giving release from *dukkha*.

I would like to explain this to you so that you understand all the reasoning—but I have no way to do so because my command of English is no good, forcing me to speak through a translator.

Concerning *vimutti* (release or freedom), the Lord Buddha revealed it fully—because the Lord knew it truly and the *Sāvaka Arahants* also knew it in the same way. They never disputed amongst themselves about it; they all revealed it in just the same way. None of the *Arahants* have any doubt about it at all, for they have seen that *Nibbānaṁ paramaṁ sukhaṁ* (*Nibbāna* is the ultimate happiness).

Nibbānaṁ paramaṁ suññaṁ. All of us know emptiness (*suñña*) in the way that people in the world generally understand it, meaning that everything has disappeared. It is like this glass tumbler here: if someone takes it, or if it breaks, we are then empty of this glass. This is the way the conventional world (*sammuti*) sees it.

But "emptiness" in the manner of *vimutti*, as was known by the Lord Buddha and the *Sāvaka Arahants*, is of a different kind. The ordinary person has never seen the happiness that comes from emptiness. So, in spite of the fact that the Lord Buddha always taught true things, we are bound to be doubtful and deny it. For our hearts, which are still not pure, cannot yet accept it and have not reached an understanding of it. The *citta* which is still false is not yet likely to accept true things as its objective support (*ārammaṇa*). It is like excellent food, well-prepared, that drops on the ground—we do not like to eat it. The Dhamma of the Lord Buddha is pure, but if a person's *citta* is dirty, it cannot accept Dhamma in a good way. When the *citta* and the Dhamma are both pure, they blend well together. So none of the *Arahants* had the slightest doubt in regard to the *vimutti* that the Lord Buddha constantly taught.

Q5 M4: The belief in "self", where does it come from?

A: It comes from ourselves. Suppose that we go out looking for a horse and we find a horse. But instead of catching it, we try to retrace its footprints, thinking: "It will be a horse that came from there, won't it?" What use will this be? Or again, if we go walking and get a thorn stuck in our foot, what should we do? Should we pull the thorn out and put medicine on the wound, or should we investigate to find out what the thorn is, where it comes from and so on? If we do the latter, the wound may go septic and spread until eventually we may have to have the leg amputated. If we do not want to lose a leg, we should do the former, but if we do not mind we can do the latter.

Seventh Meeting

Sunday, June 16th, 1974

Ajaan Mahā Boowa gave the following talk:

Today I will give some explanation of Dhamma before answering questions. I will not talk for long as I am afraid the translator will not be able to remember.

The word *sāsana* (religion), if its meaning is shown by analogy with things in this world, is like clean pure water. The *citta* is like an object which is in continual use. It will probably come into frequent contact with dirty things and so it should be continually cleaned and washed, otherwise one should not go on using it anymore.

The *citta* works the whole time, always thinking, speaking and acting. Because of that, the *citta* is important to people who tend to think and imagine all the time without considering whether what they think is good or bad, or whether it is dangerous to them or to others who are in any way associated with them.

The Buddhism is like water that washes and cleanses the *citta*, always keeping it clean. If the *citta* is likened to clothes, one can say that they are fit to be worn; or if it's likened to household utensils, they are suitable for use and are not unpleasant. But if these things are not washed constantly, they become unfit for use. The *citta* which is not good is the same.

The *citta* that's regularly washed and trained is likely to be clear, clean, calm, cool and developed in ways appropriate to Dhamma. Nothing in the world can accept Dhamma as well as the *citta*, which is the vessel for receiving Dhamma.

The Lord Buddha practised until his heart was pure, so the Dhamma cleansed the heart of the Lord until it was clean and free from blemish, taint or intoxication with the world. The Buddha taught all equally, regardless of status or caste, so Buddhism is not a danger to anyone. Like clean water, people of every status and caste can use it and nobody dislikes it.

Buddhism comes from the Lord who was genuinely pure. The Lord Buddha was thus the first "hand" to be clean. The "hands" of the *Sāvakas* of the Lord Buddha were also clean, so the first "hand" and the second "hand" were both clean. Since the *Sāvaka Sangha* had all attained the purity of *Arahantship*, the Dhamma which was propagated and taught in those days was clean and gave results to those who listened with full attention.

From there it began to get more and more tainted, and the taints were connected with those who were associated with religion. Religion thus became a basis for antagonism, so that religions that people didn't like were seen to be enemies of their own religion. Thus there arose a liking for this religion and a loathing for that one, which was not the intention of the religion or of its founder.

The founders of every true religion did not want people to spoil its harmony, or to break it up by opposing the religious teaching. They taught that people should blend well together and not split up and break the harmony, for this is a hindrance for the religion. But since the heart has the mundane world hidden within it, this inner world has the power to make people act according to its mundane nature. Religion can therefore be a danger to those who dislike it and a boon to those who like it.

Amongst those who believe in different religions, there arose conflict and disagreement and they looked down on, reviled and despised each other's religion.

Religion thus became a tool for the two sides to quarrel over, with dirty hearts driving them on.

But the religions themselves remain good because they teach people to be good in accordance with their knowledge, ability and good intentions. When we learned various branches of knowledge at school, not all knowledge came from one teacher, for one taught us this and another taught us that, and it is just about impossible that they should all have taught exactly the same things. The Lord Buddha taught Dhamma so that people would attain the level of *Arahant*. An *Arahant* is one who has reached the level of *visuddhi guṇa* (the quality of purity)—he is a pure person with a pure *citta*.

Whatever basic level of development a person has, he can teach about that level, depending also on his inherent ability to teach. The person who learns can also receive the teaching to an extent depending on his inherent ability to learn. Therefore, the extent to which we will be able to follow and practise the way of the religion will also depend on our own ability, because to go further than the ability of the teacher and the pupil who practises is almost impossible.

All of us have hope in our hearts, for we are not people who have given up hope, but it may not yet show itself so that we may know it in ourselves. Some hopes have already been fulfilled, some have not and some have only been partly fulfilled. The principles of Dhamma in Buddhism bring fulfilment of people's hopes in a way that is complete and satisfactory. There is no need to talk about people who have given up hope, because they have not decided to become good people, and so are likely to remain hopeless. So we should act and behave in such a way that will always give us hope. Hope makes us good people who practise generosity, morality and meditation, and based on this—whether today, tomorrow, this life or in future lives—we will not become people who have no refuge and no support since we have the Dhamma which continues to be with us.

Normally the heart contains good, evil and neutral things, so it can develop or deteriorate accordingly. The wisest people therefore try to train the mind so that they become good people. When it gets difficult, they will try to be victorious over all bad things by taking hold of Dhamma as their refuge, as the basic principle of their hearts. They will then gain the hopes of their hearts in full measure in the future.

The hearts of people cannot disappear. They can deteriorate or they can develop and be made pure. When the *citta* has become pure, happiness which is not of a type found in this world will be found by the one who practices. He will then realize within himself what kind of happiness it is.

Any of you who have questions may ask them now. If you bring up the essential points of Dhamma from the subject of today's talk, I will be very glad to explain them it in accordance with mindfulness and wisdom in a practical way.

Questions and Answers

Q1 W1: Is it true that the *citta* is the awareness of right and wrong (conscience), and that this *citta* dwells in the heart?

A: Yes. It is that normal awareness which is always present, the awareness of right and wrong of a person (or other being accordingly). The Lord said that the *citta* dwells in the *hadayavatthu* (heart base), which is the centre of the body. But one should understand that the *citta* is *nāma dhamma*, so it just "knows"—it is not a physical object even though it dwells in the *hadayavatthu*, so it is not like an egg or a fruit dwelling in a shell. Therefore, all one can say is that it just dwells there, although the meaning of this is difficult for one to imagine or to guess.

Q2 M2: When sitting in *samādhi* and it gets painful, how should we overcome this?

A: There are several ways to remedy this: 1) Thinking that it is better to sleep, you turn and escape to your pillow as your refuge. 2) When it becomes painful due to sitting, then get up and walk *caṅkama*. Thus by changing postures the pain goes away. 3) As soon as it becomes painful, concentrate on the pain and ask yourself: "Where is the pain?" Look at the parts of the body, the condition of the *citta* and the state of the feeling, until you see them all equally as they truly are. Then the painful feeling will either cease entirely, or you will see truly that even though those parts of your body are *dukkha*, the *citta* is not *dukkha*. Because of that, the *dukkha* is not able to overpower the *citta*. Because the *citta* is unshakably established, the conditions will go as far as they can and then give way of themselves. When you are confident in yourself that the method of fighting against *dukkha* by investigating is the best and highest way, you should analyse *dukkha* into external and internal. But practising and striving in this way is truly very painful—as though your bones are breaking apart, or as though you are on fire all over. You want to know the extent of your ability, but you must fight before you know how far your *citta* is able to go. You still do not know for sure what *dukkha vedanā* (painful feeling) really is; whether it is *dukkha*, the cause of *dukkha* (*samudaya*), the cessation of *dukkha* (*nirodha*), or the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha* (*magga*). So mindfulness and wisdom must be used to search and think it out. If you can search it out to completion, it can quench *dukkha*—like burning gunpowder which flares up and in a moment it all goes out—but the *citta* remains. So take up *dukkha vedanā* and examine what kind of *dukkha* arises at the moment the body breaks up and ceases to exist. In truth, *dukkha* arises and ceases continuously, but the *citta* itself never dies. In fact, the *citta* becomes more and more clear, and then drops into a state of calm beyond your expectations. But those who are afraid of dying will have to experience death over and over again. Therefore, one should take up this meditation on *dukkha vedanā* and put it into practise.

But be advised, it is much more difficult to do than the ordinary meditation methods where one sleeps at times and wakes up at times, which do not give the good results that one ought to get.

Q3 M2: Can we use this method to cure other problems such as distraction or restless thoughts?

A: The *dukkha* that arises from pain is *dukkha* of the physical body. Distraction is *dukkha* also, but it is *dukkha* which arises from the heart because the "origin of *dukkha*" is the cause of it. It can be quieted by the method mentioned above, and those who practise have done this until they have obtained results which are satisfactory. Those who want the highest results should not feel repelled by this method which can fight the tricks and deceits of the *kilesas* better than any other method.

Q4 M2: *Taṅhā* (craving) is the origin of *dukkha*, is it not?

A: In what way is there *dukkha* together with *taṅhā* (craving), and in what way is there *dukkha* without *taṅhā*? You must examine further. In other words, just wanting *dukkha* to go away is *taṅhā*. But if you want to know the reasons for it, such as: "What is *dukkha*? What is its cause? How can I get rid of *dukkha*?"—that is the path. Desire in the direction of getting free from *dukkha* by turning towards the search for the way of peace and happiness is not *taṅhā*, but *magga*.

Q5 M3: Mindfulness and *samādhi* are two steps of the Eightfold Path, and it seems that they are the 7th and 8th stages. How are mindfulness and *samādhi* in the Eightfold Path different from their use elsewhere?

A: Mindfulness is the faculty that controls the *citta*. *Samādhi* depends on mindfulness to supervise the *citta* until the *citta* can be set up in one place and remain

there so that a state of calm arises many times. In other words, at first it arises as *khaṇika samādhi*—a moment of calm and then it withdraws. Later on the calm becomes a bit deeper, which is *upacāra samādhi*. We must depend on mindfulness to retain control until wisdom comes in to investigate. When wisdom is coupled with mindfulness, we will always be able to contemplate all sorts of things. Eventually mindfulness becomes super-mindfulness and wisdom becomes super-wisdom. With mindfulness in control, the *citta* which has faults in it will depend on mindfulness to protect it and correct its faults. If the *citta* becomes calm and free from the *kilesas* that disturb it, there is no need to cure them at that moment. The *citta* will then be absolutely calm, which is *appanā samādhi* (full absorption). This is the way we talk about practice.

The training is difficult in the beginning. To start with, you have never done it before, so you have never seen what results come from doing it. You must depend on mindfulness to force you to do the training, going against your inclinations by using reason to show the need for it. But once the results begin to appear in your *citta*, interest in the training and the will and the effort to do it will steadily follow. Then the more that strange and unusual results begin to appear in the *citta*, the more the effort comes of itself.

Those factors of Dhamma which are the means of attaining successful results—being the four *iddhipāda* (roads to success), including: *chanda* (satisfaction), *viriya* (effort or striving), *citta* (pleasurable absorption or interest) and *vimaṁsa* (careful consideration or thought)—will steadily become stronger, until they enable one who practises to attain his intended goal without any obstacle being able to stop him.

Q6 W1: When we are able to do *samādhi*, will the time come when we no longer needs to sit in meditation?

A: Before you are able to read, you must persevere in learning to spell out words and practise writing. When you are going to write the word "you", you must spell it out y-o-u. Then the time comes when you are able to write, so that when you think of the word "you" you can write it without having to spell it out. But does someone who can read and write then stop reading and writing?

Training in *samādhi* is the same as the above. To begin with, mindfulness must be used constantly to supervise and force the *citta* to do it. As he goes on doing it, the one who practises will be successful and get various results for himself, and he will gain skill and ability. When he practises *samādhi*, striving to get rid of the *kilesas* until he eventually becomes free from them all, he still goes on doing *samādhi*. But he no longer strives for freedom from the *kilesas* because they are already gone.

When he lies down to rest and sleep, he stops; but when he gets up, he uses mindfulness and wisdom in all sorts of activities, including the practice of *samādhi* meditation that he continues to do. He does not throw away the work that he has done, in the same way as someone who is able to read and write does not stop reading. He goes on doing this so that it shall be of increasing value in various ways. He does not stop just because he is able to read and write. The practise of *samādhi* meditation by those who have got rid of the *kilesas* is like this; they must go on doing it for the purpose of *vihāra dhamma*—living comfortably in this world where the *dhātu* and *khandhas* (mind and body) live.

Q7 W1: When our hearts are not calm—please give some advice on how to cure this state.

A: Generally, for those who practise, it is like I have already explained. You must use effort a great deal until you become calm. You must also use mindfulness and wisdom to overcome those things which are obstacles in whatever way is appropriate to the practice. Eventually, the one who practises will know for himself that he is in a position to get free from all obstacles so that that he need not be born

again. In this respect, the Dhamma is unbiased and immediately shows results to those who practise truly and steadily.

In the *Ti-piṭaka* it states that he Lord Buddha and the *Sāvakas* claimed they had to force themselves to put forward effort very often before they gained Enlightenment. From then up to the time when they each entered *Parinibbāna*, the Buddha and the *Sāvakas* still entered *samādhi* and *nirodha samāpatti*, which is a way for the *citta* to dwell comfortably "at ease" amongst the *khandhas* (*vihāra dhamma*), until the time when the *citta* departed from the body, which could not last any longer, and entered *Nibbāna*, the ultimate happiness free from trouble of any kind at all.

When the Lord Buddha was about to enter *Parinibbāna*, he entered *samādhi*. He entered the first *jhāna* and went up stage by stage to the state of *saññā-vedayita-nirodha samāpatti*, and then returned step by step back to the first *jhāna*. Then he began at the first *jhāna* and went up to the fourth *jhāna* and attained *Parinibbāna* between the *rūpa jhānas* and the *arūpa jhānas*.

Because the Lord Buddha was able to do and experience the highest levels like this, all the *Sāvakas* persevered in following his example until they succeeded in becoming *Arahants* following the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha sought and found Dhamma until he became enlightened. Then he continually taught the Dhamma to his followers until the day he entered *Parinibbāna*. All of us, therefore, should faithfully take to heart that: *Buddhaṁ Saraṇaṁ Gacchāmi*—the Buddha is our refuge; *Dhammaṁ Saraṇaṁ Gacchāmi*—the Dhamma is our refuge; *Sanghaṁ Saraṇaṁ Gacchāmi*—the Sangha is our refuge. In our status as Buddhists, we do not wholeheartedly take anyone else as our refuge in the same way we do the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, which are most excellent and supreme.

Q8 W1: Is it true that the practice of *vipassanā* (insight) does not attain *jhāna*?

A: The Lord Buddha entered *jhāna samāpatti* (*jhāna* attainment). The *Sāvakas* strove to clean out the *kilesas* until they attained purity and became *Arahants* of four dif-

ferent kinds. The purity which they attained was essentially the same for all four types. As for the specific characteristics of their *cittas*—each had special qualities in accordance with his tendencies of character, like those who were praised for the quality in which they were the most skilled and capable.

When the *khandhas* and *citta* had still not separated, they entered *samādhi samāpatti* in whatever way suited their characters and skills, until they reached the end of their time. *Jhāna* is the realm which gives the heart a rest; whereas *vipassanā* is the examination (contemplation) of natural phenomena (*sabhāva dhamma*) so as to know the truth of them clearly, so as to let go of your attachment to them one after another, until you reach the end of the things that you should let go of. Then you reach purity and freedom.

As to the question whether *vipassanā* will lead to *jhāna* or not, this is the concern of stupid people who speculate in their habitual ways of thought, but do not begin to do anything in connection with them.

Q9 W1: I do not understand what the characteristics of entering *jhāna* are.

A: Don't be anxious about *jhāna*. *Jhāna* is just a by product of doing the practice, and you should not let it become an obsession. The aim of training yourself in order to cut away the *kilesas* so that they are got rid from the heart is the thing which you should be most interested in.

Q10 M4: What is the meaning of *citta*?

A: The *citta* is *viññāṇa* in the five *khandhas*. This is the "knowing" that arises when external thing contact and stimulate the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body or heart (mind). When stimulation takes place, the *citta* knows it, and then it ceases—which is the story of arising (or birth) and ceasing (or dying). Ultimately, the *citta* is your basic, fundamental "knowing". The *citta* is constantly creating the conditions for

becoming and birth, so it's always being reborn, dependent upon those things which are infused into the *citta*.

Q11 M4: Are the *citta* and wisdom the same thing?

A:The *citta* and wisdom are different, but they are related to each other. There is a way, however, in which they can be one, and those who practise should be able to know this in a natural way for themselves while they are practising.

Going by general principles, mindfulness and wisdom are mental factors that can arise and cease in the same way as all phenomena. Therefore, to say that they are one and the same as the heart is not proper. On the other hand, they are factors of the path (*magga*)—or tools for curing the *kilesas* so as to attain purity of heart.

Q12 W2: May we ask if we could sit in *samādhi* together with you for a long time?

A: For those who have already done a lot of practice, sitting in *samādhi* for a long time is not a problem. But you cannot expect those who have just begun to learn to sit for a long time. For that reason, people must decide on the amount of time for sitting that is appropriate to their ability.

As for sitting together in a group, this will probably depend on circumstances. But the important thing is, you should sit according to your own temperament; whether this will be for a long time or not should be up to you.

Q13 M5: How does *anattā* differ from going to be born again?

A: *Attā* and *anattā* are *dhammas* that are paired off together until the ultimate limit of the mundane relative world (*sammuti*)—until the *citta* is free from the *kilesas* and has become a special *citta*. *Attā* and *anattā* then disappear of themselves and there is no need to drive either of them out, for there is just the entirely pure *citta*, which is *eka-citta*, *ekadhamma*—no further duality with anything.

The word *anattā* is a factor of the *Ti-lakkhaṇa*. Those who aim for purity, freedom and *Nibbāna* should contemplate *anicca, dukkha* and *anattā* until they see and understand all three *Ti-lakkhaṇa* clearly. Then it may be said that the *citta* has "gone well free". *Nibbāna*, however, is not *anattā*. How can you force it to be *anattā*, which is one of the *Ti-lakkhaṇa*, and therefore part of the path for getting to *Nibbāna*?

Eight Meeting

Monday, June 17th, 1974

Ajaan Mahā Boowa gave the following talk:

When the *citta* is calm it also wants to sleep, which is strange. In other words, when the *citta* is calm it is contented, and when it is not calm it is not contented. When thinking far and wide it is not contented and does not want to sleep, but as soon as the *citta* begins to get calmer and calmer it wants to sleep, which means that it gets increased happiness. A short while ago I was sitting developing calm and also felt that I would like to sleep, but I did not let it go as far as sleep because sleep puts not only the *citta*, but also the body into a state of rest.

While listening to a Dhamma talk (*desanā*), you become absorbed in listening to the Dhamma. The *citta* is attending to the sound of the Dhamma talk, which is its only object of attention. The *citta* gradually becomes more and more calm, causing it to become drowsy and go into a dreamy doze. Some people blame themselves, saying: "How is this? When I am alone or talking with my friends I don't feel sleepy. So why is it that when I listen to a Dhamma talk I want to sleep, and I sit nodding out of control. From where does this *Māra* come?"

What is this about *Māra*?! The *citta* has never experienced happiness and contentment, but as soon as it receives the "flow of Dhamma", lulling it into happiness, calm and contentment, it just wants to go to sleep. From where does *Māra* come? In truth, the owner (of this *citta*) is the *Māra* that disturbs the *citta* all day and night without allowing any peace and contentment to arise, until the *citta* cannot sleep because it is not calm. But we don't understand the reason for this. As soon as we listen to the teacher giving a Dhamma talk, the *citta* grows calm and thus wants to sleep. We then says that it is *Māra*! Truly it is not *Māra*, for we all tend to feel sleepy as soon as we become contented.

This means that the result of the stage where the *citta* is sufficiently contented is a tendency to want to sleep. This happens at the first stage of the training.

If the *citta* has a foundation of calm, then it has work to do while listening to a Dhamma talk. The nature of that work will depend on the foundation or basic level of the *citta*. Then we will not be drowsy. If we have been doing *samādhi*, then we will be engrossed in *samādhi*. When we are at the level of wisdom, we will become engrossed in contemplation while the teacher is giving the Dhamma talk. Our hearts will tend to follow and become enraptured by the object of attention of Dhamma. It is as though the teacher helps to clear the way so that one can follow in his footsteps, step by step. This indicates that one has got to the stage of *vipassanā*—which means contemplation—and the *citta* is engrossed in following the object of contemplation, so there's no drowsiness.

This shows how drowsiness occurs when one begins to do meditation practice. In other words, the *citta* does not normally want to drop into a state of calm, but as soon as it begins to feel calm, the calm makes it want to lie down and sleep—because calm is contentment.

In evaluating or proving a religion, and most especially Buddhism—which is the teaching of the Buddha—the evaluation should be done with one's own heart. In what way did the Lord teach? Take up the Lord's method and practise it, or take up

the method which the Lord taught and put it into the practice for the sake of your own heart—in other words, practise to develop your heart. If your heart follows the way that the Lord taught, what sort of results will you get? You will gradually come to know the truth for yourself. Then the proof of the Buddha's teaching on Dhamma will appear in your own heart, showing you which things are good and true and which are false.

You will come to know this gradually by taking the principles of the teaching as a means of pointing out the truth and falsehood which is in your own heart—for they are not to be found anywhere else except in your own heart.

Generally we do not know that our hearts contain false things, nor do we know from where or from what the falsehood comes. When we do not know this, we think that we are good and clever—more clever than any teaching, more clever than Buddhism, more clever than the Buddha, more clever than any teacher who founded a religion to teach the world. We assume this, even though it is an extremely stupid opinion. In fact, it is our extreme stupidity that makes us think we are supremely clever.

When we have taken up the principles of Buddhism and put them into practice to test and see to what extent they are actually true, then we will be able to know the truth about the principles of Dhamma which the Lord taught.

In the beginning, we are not able to do this effectively. So we start by taking it in brief, or by taking up a short, easy method, such as the Lord's teaching of *bhāvanā* (meditation). How do we focus our attention so that it may be called *bhāvanā* ?

In the principles that are taught in Buddhism, there are various different methods to suit the abilities of those who practise so that they may attain a calm and peaceful heart—which is the result that comes from practice. For example, focusing your attention on your breathing (*ānāpānasati*). In doing this, you should continually feel the breath as it enters and leaves. Don't let your attention slip and wander away! And don't let go of the *citta* and send it away to other things! Just

develop understanding and knowing of the breath—this is one method of knowing about the truth and falsehood of one's own heart.

When your heart becomes calm, you will see the falsehood of your heart; and at the same time, you will also see the truth that is in it. In addition, you will see the faults of the restless, distracted wandering of the heart, which causes you to be agitated and unhappy. At the same time, you will also see the merit and virtue of a calm, cool heart, which brings you happiness while the heart is calm. This is called inwardly seeing both the wrong and the right at the same time.

One who has determined to practise truly is bound to see in this way, because the principles of Buddhism guarantee that the causes are correct and accurate, and that the results are satisfying, following the experience of the Lord Buddha.

Here is a method you can try out in relation to the *citta* in order to see results coming steadily from your practice. Try to have mindfulness (*sati*) and clear self-awareness (*sampajañña*) to be aware of yourself at all times. This is a way to be careful and watchful of the *citta*, only letting it know what is within the field that you have established, so that it has a limited boundary to its knowing. Don't allow it to know in a scattered and aimless way without any limit or boundary, which is the way that nearly everybody in the world acts. Knowledge and understanding of this sort is not the type of knowledge and understanding that goes towards that level which gives rise to happiness and contentment, enabling causes and results to be seen. You must therefore have a limited field in doing the practice for the development of the *citta* by holding to the principles of Dhamma, which are the principles of Buddhism and the right way for the *citta* to go. They will guide the *citta* along those paths which are taught in Buddhism—which is the way that always leads in the right direction.

If you use one of the *parikamma* words (Buddho, Dhammo or Sangho) to establish mindfulness in the *citta*, your attention must be kept firmly on that *parikamma* word. If the mind slips away to think about all sorts of things, you should try to un-

derstand what has happened, and use various techniques, such as rapidly repeating the *parikamma* word, to bring your attention back again. Whatever technique or method that enables your heart to gain peace and calm, and to arouse various skilful means internally, may be considered to be a right method of training yourself. If the *citta* becomes calm, then concerns about time and place do not enter and make contact with the *citta*. There is just knowing and dwelling alone, and this is happiness (*sukha*). Whether you sit for a long time or not, nothing comes to cause disturbances. Wherever you sit and for however long, nothing comes into relationship with the *citta* as long as the *citta* does not go out and get entangled with things—and as long as it has Dhamma as the object of attention (*ārammaṇa*). This is a state of calm that dwells alone, and there is "self-knowing" right there at that time. This is called "knowing" by way of meditation (*bhāvanā*)—or "knowing" by means of guarding the *citta*. There is a boundary to knowing and understanding in this way. This is the initial method for progressing in meditation.

However long you go on doing the practice, you should not abandon the method that you have been in the habit of using. Instead you should hold on to it as a foundation. Thus, for example, if you are using *ānāpānasati*, you take the breath as the foundation of your practice. The skill of the *citta* that has done the breathing practice constantly for a long time, and has attained calm often, will know things at a speed which is very different from normal consciousness. In a moment it will pass on to a level of subtlety where the breath disappears and goes utterly quiet, and you will not know where the breath has gone. This indicates the level of skillfulness of the *citta*. It's like someone who learns to write the word "you". To begin with, he must think of the first letter, then the second, and so on until it is finished. But after learning for a while, the letters, the sounds, the vowels and consonants all arise together. Skillfulness of the *citta*, whether in *samādhi* or in wisdom, is similar to this—and the Lord called it *jhāna*.

The four *jhānas*—first (*pathama*) *jhāna*, second (*dutiya*) *jhāna*, third (*tatiya*) *jhāna* and fourth (*catuttha*) *jhāna* are the *rūpa jhānas*. Beyond them are the four *arūpa jhāna*, altogether making the 8 attainments (*samāpatti*), plus *saññā-vedayitta-nirodha*, which is the quelling of *saññā* (memory) and *vedanā* (feeling). But these *samāpatti* are *dhammas* that are special or are connected with the characteristic abilities (*nissaya vāsanā*) of those who are inclined to go this way, so they will occur spontaneously. But these are not *dhammas* that are necessary to the Path (*magga*) or the Fruition (*phala*), in which there is the getting rid of *kilesas* and reaching the levels and states of purity of heart leading to *Arahantship*. In any case, the person who is skilled in *jhāna* is similar to the person who is skilled in writing, and that is all. Because of the speed of the *citta*, that person can immediately reach the first *jhāna*, the second *jhāna* and so on. But the characteristics of a *citta* that easily changes its state like this means that it does not move up step by step through each successive stage like a person walking up stairs. However able we are at going up stairs, we do not jump several steps at a time, but go up one by one. But the special skill of the *citta* inclined to attain *jhāna* is such that in one moment it can reach its intended goal with extreme rapidity. Nothing is faster than the *citta*, and this type of *citta* is the fastest. And the more it becomes skilled in these functions, the faster it becomes, beyond the imagination of anyone who has not seen the power of the *citta* that is used to knowing and seeing various things in the practice of Dhamma.

Samādhi is similar for such a person. Once the heart has become accustomed to being calmed by his own skill, there is no need for him to find a *parikamma* word to fix his attention and force the *citta* to remain still so as to make it enter a state of calm. As soon as the *citta*'s activity is limited by means of mindfulness, it immediately becomes fully calmed. Within just half a second it attains calm and reaches a state of tranquility. Nothing hinders it as it drops to the level of *samādhi*. This is what is meant by one who has skill in *samādhi*. As soon as that person fixes his attention for just one moment, the *citta* goes entirely through (into *samādhi*)—just as

one can write the word "you" and immediately read it without any need to grope and think or search for the vowels and consonants, spending a lot of time as we had to in the beginning.

In speaking of the levels of *samādhi*, when you are skilled, it is as described above. But please do not assume that you are skilled, for this is a kind of speculation that can easily deceive you, wasting a lot of time and preventing you from seeing the results in the way that you ought to. Whether you are skilled or not, simply train yourself in that method that you normally use. This is an important principle, which also applies when learning how to write. We write a single letter over and over again until we are skilled at doing it. There is no need to anticipate the way to write all the other letters, for in due time, skill at them will grow of itself as we go on practising. The method of training the heart is like this, for skill will arise and grow naturally as we train ourselves.

Paññā is wisdom of the *citta*. Thinking and (mentally) putting things together by contemplating using reason based on Dhamma is called *paññā* by the Lord Buddha. In other words, wisdom means carefully examining, contemplating, investigating the elements (*dhātu*), the *khandhas*, and the changes of nature (*sabhāva*) both externally and internally that are going on all the time everywhere. For when one has the mindfulness and wisdom needed to fix one's attention anywhere, the whole of it will be Dhamma.

All these factors are like grindstones for sharpening wisdom continually. In every position and posture one will see these natural things (*sabhāva*) displaying their characteristics, which are known by way of wisdom all the time. So Dhamma is to be found everywhere. It is not found just when you sit doing meditation or when you are walking *caṅkama*, for it is there at all times, so you need only make the effort to see it in all situations.

The nature of wisdom practice is vast and very strange. To do what is truly appropriate, the teacher should explain to those who have a need to hear it only that

particular aspect of wisdom they are dealing with at the time. This is the most suitable way to teach wisdom. Apart from that, he may explain enough to be a step or a pathway so that those who are beginning to train themselves in investigation may follow it, as in the explanation which has just been given.

The *citta* can be trained, but the characteristics of the *citta* are things which can go on altering and changing step by step. From being gross, they can improve and become refined, depending on you who are the owner of them, and the way in which you direct them to go. Thus, for example, we have trained ourselves in the moral precepts (*sīla dhamma*) and we are at present training in meditation for *samādhi* (*samādhi bhāvanā*), which is the training of the *citta* which raises it up to a higher level.

When we consider the processes of the *citta*, then thinking of everything from the point of view of reason and morality is a way to make us act so that we rise higher—but there will also be things within ourselves which we will have to get rid of. In other words, there are both those things that we see to be bad which we should get rid of, and those things that we see to be right which we should practise and develop more and more. This may be called the practice or the training of the *citta* for the purpose of attaining the level of understanding where causes and results steadily go higher.

Conversely, if the *citta* deteriorates, knowledge and understanding change and become steadily lower and lower. But if the *citta* reaches complete purity, neither deterioration nor development take place, because the conditions that bring about deterioration and development have then disappeared from the heart. There remains only complete purity—the heart is Dhamma and Dhamma is the heart. The heart and Dhamma are one and the same. From then on, no more changing and altering occurs. You have come to the end of the practice of *brahmacāriya* for attaining the highest levels of Dhamma, and has completed the task of getting rid of all the *kilesas*.

When you have finished the task of getting rid of the *kilesas* by fully developing Dhamma, what else is there to get rid of? There is nothing else there, because everything has been got rid of already. And there is nothing more you can do to develop higher than this because you has reached the highest already. As for deterioration, there is no basis for this to happen because you have reached *akuppa dhamma*—unshakable Dhamma—so there is no way for the *citta* to deteriorate. The work which ought to be done, which is that of "getting rid of" and "developing", has already been done to completion. This level of the *citta* has nothing mundane (*sammuti*) entering and hiding in it—no time, no place, no past or future in relation to the present, such as, "now it is like this, in the future what will it be like?" This sort of time factor does not arise in the pure *citta*. "This life is like this, next life will be like that"—does not occur in it—because the past and future have come together to exist in the present, having become pure (*parisuddhi*) in the heart. Past and future, which used to be associated with the heart, thus have no meaning at all, because the heart is devoid of the kind of meaning that would lead it into all sorts of delusions. If we called this the ultimate *citta* and the ultimate limit of the path along which the *citta* goes, it would not be wrong.

Everything that I have said here comes directly from the principles of practice, which are the results that come from the practice of the Dhamma. These principles follow the religion of the Buddha, which is the right path to follow, and one in which all Buddhists can be confident. There is no reason to doubt that the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha has anything in it that might cause the world to be disrupted. Following the Dhamma cannot lead us to disappointment or to loss of faith. Where in all the 84,000 *Dhammakkhandhas* could we find cause for this? Nowhere! Therefore, there are no problems for those who practise Dhamma properly.

The only question that remains is: How do we practise so as to progress in accordance with the principles of the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha? Dhamma is called the *svākkhata dhamma* (rightly-taught Dhamma). It is also *niyyānika dhamma*, because it

steadily leads those who practise rightly to freedom from obstacles that obstruct the heart, until finally they penetrate through and reach *vimutti*, or ultimate freedom. Then there is nothing left remaining in the heart. This is the ultimate and final result that comes from the practice of the Dhamma of Buddhism.

When one has reached this level, the heart and the religion are one and the same. The *sāsana* and the heart cannot then find fault with each other. The heart is then genuine, the *sāsana* is also genuine, each being respectively true. When the Lord Buddha said: "Whoever sees the Dhamma sees the *Tathāgata*", he meant this Dhamma. The *Tathāgata*, in this case, is not the bodily form of the Buddha. The Buddha's bodily form is one aspect of the *Tathāgata*. It refers to the bodily form of the Lord Buddha, which is of the same nature as our own bodies. In other words, someone who had seen the Lord Buddha and had saluted, paid homage and done *pūja* to the Lord, could say that he had seen the *Tathāgata* with his eyes. This is considered to be seeing one kind of *Tathāgata.*

Another way of seeing the *Tathāgata* is when someone recollects the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha with faith and belief until he reaches Dhamma; in which case, he has also reached the Lord Buddha. Yet another way is when someone attains, stage by stage, the levels of *Sotāpanna*, *Sakādāgāmī* or *Anāgāmī*. This may be called seeing the *Tathāgata* step by step until the final stage is reached.

The true *Tathāgata* is purity of Dhamma and purity of heart, meaning that Dhamma and the heart are one and the same so that no way can be found to separate them. Wherever the heart is, there the Dhamma is, and wherever the Dhamma is, there the *Tathāgata* is. Then it can be rightly said that: "Whoever sees the Dhamma sees the *Tathāgata*". Seeing in the way of practice is like this—in other words, experiencing Dhamma at the level of purity of heart following the example of Lord Buddha is called seeing Dhamma, or seeing the *Tathāgata*, consummately.

Then one has no doubts whether the *Parinibbāna* of the Lord Buddha was 2500 plus years ago, or many aeons ago, because all this is a matter of relative convention (*sammuti*), which is the same as the conventions of the world everywhere. Thus the texts have recorded the places where the Lord was at different times to act as signposts indicating the times and locations of the Lord's activities for the benefit of faithful Buddhists who wish to pay homage to the Lord by doing *pūja* on anniversaries of certain auspicious occasions.

But as far as the complete purity of heart of the true *Tathāgata* is concerned, there is no time and place associated with it at all. For the *Arahant* whose heart is entirely pure, wherever he may be, it is the same as if he were in the presence of the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha all the time—*akāliko*—eternally.

Therefore, please practise these Buddhist teachings so that they develop in your hearts. Then you will not be without the Lord as your Teacher wherever you go. This is similar to being in the presence of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha at all times until you reach *vimutti*—freedom within your *citta*. Then you will know for sure who the Master really is without having any doubts.

This explanation of Dhamma is, I think, sufficient, so I will end here.

Questions and Answers

Ajaan Mahā Boowa: When you try to remember what you are hearing while listening to an explanation of Dhamma, the *citta* will not gain real value from listening. If you want the *citta* to get value from listening to Dhamma, then let the *citta* follow along with the discourse while contemplating it at the same time. In that way, you should be able to rid yourself of some of the *kilesas* while listening. Which

kilesas they are will depend on what happens during the talk. But, by practicing in this way, you may not be able to remember what the teacher talked about.

When listening to a Dhamma talk in the manner of those who practise, one is usually less interested in remembering what is said, and more interested in looking at the *citta* and the Dhamma that the teacher is explaining at that time in order to get value from listening. For instance, the *citta* may gain calm; or wisdom may arise and get rid of certain kinds of *kilesas*.

Q1 W1: The Lord Buddha was very subtle and when he used words they had definite meaning. Why then did he sometimes talk of *citta* and sometimes of *mano*?

A: *Citta* and *mano*, together with *viññāṇa*, are synonymous with each other, so they can be used in place of each other. Why do we have several words derived from the one word "eat"—as in "eat," "eating," "eaten"? The words *citta* and *mano* are like this. They are used as required to suit the occasion.

Q2 W2: The *citta* is not *viññāṇa khandha*, so surely it is not the same as any *viññāṇa*?

A: *Mano viññāṇa* equals *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, which goes to birth in various realms of existence (*bhava*).

The teaching of the Lord Buddha is said to be composed of 84,000 *dhamma khandhas*, which are only a fraction of the whole teaching, since the Lord Buddha actually summarised the teaching to make it suitable to the capacity of beings in the world.

As people do meditation, knowledge branches out more and more so that when those who are practising speak together, they can gain a lot more knowledge from each other. But for those who have yet to gain results from practice, however it is explained it is not likely to be of much use.

The Lord Buddha had experienced more Dhamma than his disciples, so when the *Sāvakas* approached him to ask about knowledge, saying that they had come across this experience or that experience, the Lord knew all about it already and could answer immediately. Although the experiences that happen to each person are different, someone who has already had such experiences will understand and can therefore guide them on the way along which he has already gone.

Q3 W3: *Jhāna* is not wanted for developing wisdom (*paññā*)—how is this?

A: Concerning *jhāna*, if you don't have character tendencies suitable for it, there is no need to try to attain it. Only if *jhāna* arises naturally should you use it. Someone who is not circumspect will aim to attain *jhāna* much more than the path (*magga*), fruition (*phala*), and *Nibbāna*. In fact, *jhāna* is a small matter compared with *sīla, samādhi* and *paññā*, which are the tools to cure all the *kilesas*. This is like our own native language, which we all know even though we never formally learnt it, nor took exams in it, nor gained any degrees in it. We do not need any degrees to communicate with each other because just knowing our native language is enough for us to speak with each other.

Jhāna means to "concentrate intently". For instance, if you repeat "Buddho, Buddho, Buddho" with intense concentration, you can attain *jhāna*. *Jhāna* is a natural principle, but it is not essential for developing wisdom, though it may be an aid. When contemplating form (*rūpa*), *vitakka* is used—which is a factor of *jhāna*. If this contemplation is done in a natural way, you who practise can experience *jhāna* your temperament is suited to it, though it may not go in the way that it is usually explained. *Jhāna* interests us Buddhists a great deal even though we have hardly experienced any genuine results of *jhāna*—but we tend to talk extravagantly enough about it to be annoying!

Q4 W4: Please tell me how to develop calm (*samatha*).

A: The training to make the *citta* quiet is *samatha*, or calm. Contemplation and analysis that branches out step by step, giving rise to understanding, is wisdom.

Q5 W2: *Samādhi* and *vipassanā* are two different ways to meditate, are they not? Some people say that we should practise the way of *samatha*, others that we must practise the way of *vipassanā*. But can we alternate between the two?

A: When you desire calm, you practises *samatha*. When you contemplate with wisdom so as to arouse methods of analysis by examining both externally and internally, it is called *vipassanā*.

Q6 W2: I feel that it is more difficult to develop wisdom (*paññā*) than calm (*samatha*).

A: When you do *samādhi*, you aim for calm; when you do *vipassanā*, you aim for seeing truly with wisdom. You should do them at different times and you should not mix them together. There are many kinds of work done in the world; some easy, some difficult. It is necessary for some people to do work that is difficult. If those people are afraid of difficulties, they will not be able to accomplish anything. So when the time comes to work, you should truly work hard and persevere at it until you see the fruit of that work. If you do this, you will have the means to accomplish the correct results both in *samādhi* and *vipassanā*—it is not beyond one's ability.

Q7 W2: How can we develop our outlook so as to make us not afraid of difficulties?

A: By the training to develop wisdom. When should you do it? You may do it anytime, anywhere. Train yourself to think, to consider carefully, to meditate, to "use your head". Analyse the elements (*dhātu*) and *khandhas* from the outside going in-

ward. Analyse those elements and *khandhas* that are inside of you, bringing them up for comparison with external things until you see with wisdom that they both have the same characteristics. If you have already entered the level of *vipassanā*, you will know for yourself extensively, and this will go on increasing. If you are simply afraid of difficulties, you will meet nothing but the difficulties that are there in your heart. Then they will always be an obstacle to your work, so that you never have an opportunity to do that work. This fear of difficulties is a very important *kilesa* indeed! Trying hard with persistence to oppose difficulty and hardship is the Path (*magga*). It is the tool for curing every kind of *kilesa*, so you should take interest in it.

Q8 W2: In two or three days time I will enter a training course for teachers in order to learn how to teach religion to children. How can I help children to have a broad understanding of religion?

A: There is no obstacle in teaching others that is greater than the obstacle of teaching yourself. Let us understand that before teaching others. In teaching religion, you are only able to teach others to the extent that you yourself understand the religion. To understand religion by way of the texts is easy, but to understand it truly with your heart is difficult, both for yourself and for others. Therefore, it is truly very important to practise the religion first in order to understand it.

Q9 W5: When one has determined to listen to a talk but cannot remember it afterwards—would you say something about this?

A: When you can remember what was said, what value do you get from it? One may answer that one gets the instructions on how to practice. But truly speaking, nothing is lost in being unable to remember. Furthermore, it can bring you valuable results in a different way, for the heart gains calm at the time of listening because

there is no anxiety about remembering. You will be able to remember the Dhamma retained within the heart, meaning that what was heard and understood made a deep impression and resulted in happiness of heart while you were listening. It is comparable to a child eating food. The child need not know from where the food comes, or how it was processed. While he is eating, he gets the satisfying taste of it. He takes the food which provides nourishment for his body, keeping it fit and well, and that is sufficient.

There is no need to memorise everything while listening, but you should calm the heart and keep it focused inside. Do not send it outside at that time. The *citta* will receive knowledge by continually following the Dhamma which is being explained. Then the results of calm and peace will arise. Or various ways and means will come to mind as you listen. This is what is meant by making gains from listening in the way of practice.

Q10 W5: You say nothing is lost if we don't remember. This gives me a lot of hope.

A: Taking notes and remembering names and words while listening is of no value at all. All you get then is the names of Dhamma and of the *kilesas*, but the *kilesas* diminish neither in strength nor in numbers. When you listen without remembering but, at the same time, you follow the discourse with understanding, you will probably succeed in getting rid of *kilesas* as you listen. So, even though you cannot remember what was said, you will get successful results in the way of practice. While listening with mindfulness firmly established within your heart and not sending it out externally, not even to the person who is explaining at that moment, the "knowing" inside is limited to yourself. Because of that, you are likely to be able to understand the Dhamma that is being explained better than if you were to send your awareness out to receive it. Good results will then appear steadily in the heart. They will be able reduce and get rid of *kilesas* bit by bit every time that you listen, until you are able to go beyond them, as happened in the time of the

Buddha when many attained both *magga* and *phala* while listening to the Buddha. Therefore, listening to Dhamma is an aspect of practice that is much more important than doing the practice on your own, and those who practise have been very interested in it ever since those days.

Ninth Meeting

Tuesday, June 18th, 1974

I WILL BEGIN BY explaining Dhamma as I have done before. Afterwards, those who have questions that they want to ask will be able to do so.

Concerning listening to Dhamma: yesterday a question was raised about the ability to remember what is discussed, and what its value is if you cannot remember.

While listening to a Dhamma talk, those who practise understand what is being explained while they are listening. But now the teacher speaks a different language, so you who listen are unable to understand what he is explaining. But if your *citta* stays just in front—in other words, the determination to listen at this time has been made—this, together with the flow of Dhamma that is being explained, goes inward and makes an impression within the *citta*. This will make the heart aware of the impact of the sound and it will at least become calm and cool. This occurs because the sound is an object of attention (*ārammaṇa*) which can cause the *citta* to stay in the present moment.

As for those who listen and understand the language all the time while Dhamma explanations are being given, they have something which they can know clearly while listening. Then the *citta* becomes engrossed in that aspect of Dhamma which

the teacher is explaining. When explaining Dhamma, the teacher must speak about things which are there within us also, which are things to be found everywhere in the world. In other words, the things which the teacher of Dhamma talks about, and which Buddhism teaches, concern things that inherently exist within beings everywhere. You should also be able to know those things, and to understand how they are present within yourself. The Lord Buddha also gave instructions about these things, so those who listened to him gradually gained understanding of the truths in the Dhamma that he taught.

If your *citta* is paying close attention to the Dhamma that is being taught, your heart will gradually become calm and cool. While listening you will not think about going to other places, or about any objects of attachment. Then your heart can drop into a state of calm, undisturbed and contented, so that you forget the time and your tiredness and stiffness, and everything else.

If your *citta* has a strong inclination to go the way of investigation, which the Lord called *vipassanā* or *paññā*, the story is different. In that case, while Dhamma is being explained the *citta* will keep moving and following continuously, like walking behind and following in the footsteps of the teacher, who is going ahead. Each time he raises a foot, you step in the footprint after him, step by step. In other words, the teacher clears the way so that you may know and understand while listening. When you know, understand and contemplate following the teacher, you become engrossed and absorbed in examining the *kilesas* and *āsavas* while you are listening. It is for just this reason that at the time of the Lord Buddha, when the *Sāvakas* listened to the Lord revealing Dhamma, many attained *magga, phala* and *Nibbāna*.

Sometimes the *citta* advances up to a certain point and then, when it listens again in the future, the *citta* goes higher—and so on each time going up step by step until it reaches the highest point of Dhamma, which is called "penetrating the highest Dhamma", just by understanding while listening.

Not being interested in trying to remember while you are listening to Dhamma is of value in that you gain a calm and cool heart, you steadily gain a clear understanding, you gain happiness and contentment, and you gain various skilful methods. These are the good results which can be gained from listening. The same results cannot be gained from trying to remember, such as reciting Dhamma verses in various *Suttas* over and over again so as to memorise them. Listening to Dhamma as done by those who practise is therefore held in high regard amongst them.

I would like to tell you some things about Venerable Ajaan Mun, who was a teacher (*ācariya*) in the *kammaṭṭhāna* tradition, so that all of you may know a little about him. What was he most interested in teaching to those followers who went to be trained by him? He was more interested in pointing out the training in Dhamma to the *Bhikkhus* and *Sāmaṇeras* who went to learn with him than anything else. He would carefully watch the behaviour and conduct of the *Bhikkhus* and *Samaṇeras* under his care, for fear that they might go wrong and deviate from the principles of the Dhamma and *Vinaya*. But first he would emphasise the training and teaching to get the *Bhikkhus* and *Samaṇeras* to understand the "Dhamma of the present moment" (*paccupanna dhamma*) which is the focal point of the higher knowing and understanding right up to the highest Path and Fruition.

If there were only *Bhikkhus* and *Samaṇeras* present when he gave a talk on Dhamma, he would go on talking for at least two hours before finishing. Sometimes he talked for three or four hours, and occasionally for six hours. But it was strange how everyone who sat there listening was quiet, not making a sound—almost as if there were no *Bhikkhus* and *Sāmaṇeras* there at all. There was only the sound of the Dhamma that he taught, step by step, without breaking the sequence or missing out any steps until he finished.

Regardless of how many *Bhikkhus* and *Samaṇeras* were present, it was as though none were there because each was listening with interest and concentrated at-

tention. Each one of them was in a state of calm, the aim of their practice being to attain the truth and Dhamma so as to have a calm and cool heart. If the *citta* steps in towards the realm of wisdom, which means being able to think and contemplate following the *ācariya*, the *citta* then adjusts and adapts to his Dhamma all the time. Thus they became absorbed at two distinct levels: Firstly, at the level of calm. They became absorbed in the way of calm and in the Dhamma that lulls the *citta* into a calm contented state. Secondly, at the level of wisdom. They became engrossed in the Dhamma that causes the *citta* to steadily gain the way. Their interest in the Dhamma was such that they did not feel tired or stiff while listening to the teacher give a talk about matters of *samādhi* and wisdom right through to the end. Matters of *sīla* were not discussed because they were covered by the practical behaviour of each *Bhikkhu* who was present.

Ajaan Mun talked mostly about the principles of *samādhi*, wisdom and *vimutti* (freedom). On those days when he called a meeting and gave a talk, he was sure to go right through until he reached the subject of the Path, Fruition, and *Nibbāna* in the one talk without ever getting stuck or being diverted. This was due to his character. He had great knowledge and ability in the field of practice, so he exhibited circumspection and great skill in the ways of practice.

When our hearts have been continuously trained in the ways of Dhamma, we will have a "basis to hold on to". The person whose heart has a "basis to hold on to" is, because of that, likely to live happily, while being contented in doing his duties and earning a living. He then lives happily and dies happily because he has a "basis to hold on to" within himself, so he is not likely to be troubled and anxious.

Dhamma is the "basis to hold on to" for the heart. Objects in the world are the "basis to hold on to", or the dependent conditions, of the body—such as buildings, clothing, and various types of food, which are the supports that the body depends on to live. We must depend on these things because we have been born into this world with bodies that are composed of physical elements. So we must depend on

these things as a way of curing ills and maintaining the body continually until the end of our lives.

As for the heart, it has Dhamma as its help, as the thing it depends on, as its guardian, and as its nourishment—for it is said that "Dhamma is the food of the heart"—or we might say that it is the *ārammaṇa* of the heart. But in regard to the word *ārammaṇa*, there are both good and evil *ārammaṇa*. If the *ārammaṇa* is not good, it is a poison which inflames the heart, causing it to be troubled and anxious. If the *ārammaṇa* is good, it makes the heart cool and happy. It then becomes embedded in the heart, which is what they call *upanissaya*, or *vāsanā pāramī*, which means "the continuous building up of what is good and right". To whatever extent virtue has been developed, it will be embedded in the heart of that person until it becomes a strong *nissaya vāsanā*. When the heart changes and moves off to another place—another life (*bhava*) or another realm (*bhūmi*)—it must depend on the virtue that one has done and the amount of it that one has accumulated in one's heart. This is what makes the heart go in a good direction and reach *Sugati*, a favourable rebirth.

The body has a graveyard with it at all times. Wherever you go to live and set up home, that place becomes a graveyard for the body. Regardless of whether you live in the country, in the town, in the forest, the hills, a cave, or on the bare ground, there is always a graveyard waiting there. Because the body has been born, so too is it bound to die. Wherever it dies, that place is a graveyard. This is the way of the body.

As for the *citta*, it has no graveyard because the heart does not die. Right here is a great and important principle, so please take note of this and remember it well, for this is an unchanging principle of truth in regard to ourselves. If someone has rightly thought about and properly investigated matters of the *citta* and tried to practise in himself all the virtues of Dhamma in the teachings, then his hopes and

expectations of being reborn in favorable realms of existence will not be disappointed. The intended goal which he sets his heart on will be attained.

This is like all of us who have come here to learn today. In other words, we come here to learn Dhamma so that it will go into the heart and be a "basis to hold on to", so that the heart will depend on this Dhamma as its ruling principle. Because the heart is something that does not die, it is not destined for the graveyard unlike the physical elements—which are the body.

The body breaks up and disappears, but the heart does not break up. It departs this body and goes into another body; upon leaving that body it goes on to another one. The *citta* goes higher or lower, up and down, because of those things within the *citta* that the Lord called *vipāka*, which arise from *kamma*—i.e., the actions that the *citta* itself does.

The *citta* is the one who thinks and imagines things both good and evil; and the *citta* is the one who compels them to go out in the direction of speech or body, causing them to become actions of speech or body. Those actions which are done in the heart are called *mano kamma*; those done by way of speech are called *vaci kamma*; and those done by way of body are called *kāya kamma*. The word *kamma* means the doing of action, which can occur in body, speech or mind. This is important, because *kamma* opens the way for the result of *kamma* to arise. *Sukha* and *dukkha*—which are the consequences of good and bad *kamma*—are bound to arise in such a way that they cannot be prevented.

Mano kamma is action done by way of the mind, which in turn affects speech or bodily actions that may be either good, bad or neutral in nature. According to the principles of Buddhism, these actions are called *kamma*. When actions are done, the consequences of those actions—*vipāka*—must steadily go on being derived from them in the future. However, the consequences may arise more quickly or more slowly, depending on circumstances. It's like the results of things that we

can see in the world—some arise in a short time, some arise after a while, and some take a long time before they appear—but in the end they are all just results.

These moral consequences are what the Lord Buddha called *vipāka*, which we all have within our hearts. Although the heart created the causes for these results, we can only remember some of the causes—many we cannot. But ultimately, we forget them all because we are making *kamma* all the time, in every realm and in every life, every day and every night, every month and every year. Who can possibly remember all the *kamma* that he has done since the time he was born in this world? Or even that done days or months ago? Even today, we cannot remember some of the things that we have thought about. But thinking and doing of good or evil by way of body and speech take place without depending upon us being able to remember. They merely depend upon the act of doing them, and the good or bad results coming from those actions are bound to become apparent all the time. This is an important principle. The Lord taught that we should always do good actions, so we should take this opportunity to develop something of value or cure whatever we see to be defective in ourselves. This is not beyond our ability.

Once we have gone beyond this life, it is uncertain what the next life will be like. The opportunity to do good actions and partake of their results may not be available in the realms of the ghosts or the *Devas*. To be satisfied with being lazy in doing good in this life, and then expect to go and be energetic in the next life—in the world of ghosts or of *Devas*—this is a wrong way of understanding!

All the men of great wisdom have taught us that the person who came to teach us was not stupid. His name was the Lord Buddha. He was the Supreme Teacher, the teacher of the three realms of existence, the one who truly understood and clearly saw every part and section of the Dhamma which he himself taught with certainty as being the truth. There is no false, changeable Dhamma hidden within his teaching. Thus the Lord called it *svākkhata dhamma*, which means: "the Dhamma that the Lord Buddha has taught well". The word "well" means "perfectly and completely"

in all ways. *Niyyānika dhamma* is the Dhamma which enables those who practise properly in accord with Dhamma to get free from *dukkha* progressively. There is no cause for doubt at all, for it is Dhamma that is unchanging and certain.

Who can speak correctly and precisely every time like the Lord Buddha? Certainly there has never been anyone else like him in the human world. To make a comparison, if the ordinary person speaks 100 words, he will speak at least 25 that are false, and only 75 that are true. If he speaks for a long time, his false speech will probably increase until all his words become false. But the words of the Lord Buddha are never false because his heart is not false. The heart of the Lord is a pure heart; it knows truly and understands truly. That truth is derived from practising truly. When the Lord taught Dhamma, it came from the goodness and truth in his heart—so where could anything false be found? His is a Supreme Teaching. He is the World Teacher in whom all of us can have such implicit faith that we say: "The Lord Buddha and the religion of Dhamma that he taught are certainly not antagonistic toward any of us". The Lord Buddha, the Dhamma or the Sangha all possess supreme Dhamma-excellence that transcends the world.

The teaching of the Lord, which is the foundation of Buddhism, was given for the sake of the generations that followed after him. It was not given for the sake of the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma or any of the *Sāvaka Sangha*, all of whom had passed beyond *dukkha* already. But it was given just for us. The Lord was not lacking anything that might cause him to desire recompense from us as payment for his teaching. It was solely out of loving kindness and compassion that he gave the teaching to his followers so that they could take it as the direction for them to go.

It is our job to practise following the teaching of the Lord. But we see that it is difficult to do, so we feel unable to struggle following the way the Lord went. How then shall we live in this world so as to gain happiness, both bodily and mentally, which is appropriate to human beings who are clever in searching for happiness for themselves? This is a question that we should consider and ask ourselves at

those times when laziness and carelessness arise, so as to cure those faults, which are like *Māra* (the evil one) waiting to block our way forward. We can cure them by practising Dhamma, using our skill and cleverness in order to find a way to gain happiness and the fulfilment of our hopes. In that way, we will not be entirely obstructed in every existence and every life, all the time every day like we are now. Today people's hearts are so full of *dukkha* that they cannot find any way of gaining happiness. This is to be expected where there are so many people in the present world that there is almost no space on the earth left for them to live. Still, there are people who are clever and sharp-witted enough to find a means of struggling through the difficulties to find peace of mind.

How should we examine and contemplate? When we simply wait for quick and easy results, we cannot accomplish anything. The Buddha's teaching is true and correct in every respect, but when we try to practise it accordingly, we see it as being difficult. We are looking for comfort, but where does comfort actually come from? We have been living in this world a long time, but have we ever found true comfort? We should question ourselves in this way; maybe it will start us thinking. If comfort merely depended on our desires—wanting comfort, wanting ease and relaxation—we ought to be people with ease and relaxation since long ago, so we should not be shouldering a mass of *dukkha* like people everywhere in the world. But this does not accord with the image formed in our minds, which symbolises what the heart wants—an image of ease and comfort created by the *kilesas*. The *kilesas* have been deceiving people in this way for a very long time, but people still do not see the harmfulness of their deception at all. On the contrary, they agree wholeheartedly with the *kilesa*'s soothing suggestions, and allow themselves to be lulled to sleep.

The main teachers in the round of *saṁsāra* are the *kilesas* themselves. Once they have taught people, people become addicted to them. So more and more people come until the *kilesas* cannot handle them all. People very much like their tricky

methods of teaching, never feeling bored or satiated by the *kilesas* even though they have always led to *dukkha* and torment.

The supreme teacher of freedom from the round of *saṁsāra* is the Lord Buddha—the first Venerable One—the first to know, and the first to train and teach. There is nobody who is his equal. But the *kilesas* do not accept this, so they continually obstruct Dhamma. Those beings who like the *kilesas* will generally be bored with Dhamma, so the Dhamma is therefore unlikely to reach their hearts even if they listen and practise for a long time. If you have any doubts about this, please look at yourselves and you will be able to see this well enough without difficulty.

So we must analyse ourselves. If we are pupils who follow the teacher—our Supreme Teacher, the Buddha—then we must try to do good so as to wash away all things which are evil and bad. Fighting them is bound to be hard and difficult to some extent, but that is only normal. We must constantly think like this, which is better than having the *kilesas* of laziness and slothfulness come to be our teacher and then drag us into ways that are base and low, causing us to suffer *dukkha* and torment without end. Only then will we be able to get free from *dukkha*.

Now is our opportunity, so we should be organised and ready, for we are now complete in everything. Our bodies are in good health, and we know that we are human beings who have found Buddhism. This is an opportunity for us to develop virtue so that it goes down into the heart, enabling us to reach the goal that we want. Only the heart and Dhamma will be able to fulfil our hopes. We must try to add things that are good and right to the “balance sheet” of the heart. Apart from that, we cannot find anything that is certain, because the whole world of mundane conventions is impermanent (*anicca*). That includes our own bodies, which, like everything else we rely upon, will be destroyed and disappear time after time. We see this all the time—it happens everywhere. The Lord said that everything which surrounds us both externally and internally is *anicca, dukkha* and *anattā*. So we cannot trust anything except the development of virtue, which means training our-

selves to gain a steady accumulation of virtue in the way of Dhamma. This is an important principle to follow if we want to bring our purpose steadily to completion.

A heart with virtue always aims to go beyond this world. It wants to live happily; it does not want to remain in a mass of *dukkha* and torment. If we talk about levels of existence—in other words, the heavens and the *Brahma* worlds—it is the heart that wants to go there. It does not want to go down to the hells at all. In fact, *dukkha* is something that the heart does not want to experience or come into contact with at all. So why does the world find it and experience it all the time? Because the *kilesas* and their deluding tricks, which are in command, are smarter and cleverer than all living beings. They are the teachers that teach beings, dragging them all down and submerging them in *dukkha*, even though they do not want to be submerged.

Who are the primary teachers of the round of *saṁsāra* (*vaṭṭa*)—the ones that are the cleverest in the world nowadays? Just the *kilesas*, *taṅhā* and *āsava*. Apart from these, there are none more clever in the three realms of relativity (*sammuti*) where all beings dwell. And there is nothing that can extract and get rid of these *kilesas* apart from the *svākkhāta dhamma* of the Lord Buddha.

Whoever strives diligently to transcend *dukkha* by practising according to the Dhamma of the Lord, will have a way to pass beyond it. Those who are diligent in complaining about *dukkha* can complain as they please. But if we do not want to let the *kilesas* ridicule and mock us again and again, we should constantly try to understand ourselves. When we arrive at a time when we are cornered with no way out and we are truly up against it—a time that is critical for us—what will we do? We must consider that prospect and question ourselves well beforehand.

When it is cold, we see those things that make us warm as being important. When it is hot, what are those things that will make us cool? Whatever they are, we will consider them to be important at that time. When *dukkha* comes to us, what are those things which bring us *sukha*? The other half of the pair that is linked to *sukha*

is virtue, and this is the means by which *dukkha* can be diminished and eventually eliminated. Virtue can eliminate *dukkha* in a positive manner without any shadow of doubt, because never, since time immemorial, have any of the *kilesas* been able to overpower the Dhamma.

Now suppose a man falls into deep water and there is nothing to grasp or hold on to keep him from drowning. Even though he has been afraid of ghosts since he was born, if a dead body were to float by him while he was drowning and desperate for something to hold on to, he would immediately grab hold of that corpse as it floated by in order to save his life. At the same time, he would forget his long-standing fear of ghosts because his life would be much more important than his fear. This simile illustrates the mentality of someone who reaches a critical juncture in his life where he feels cornered with no way out.

The last moment at the end of your life is sure to be like this. At that critical juncture, the *citta* is bound to recall the virtue or the evil that you have done in that life. When we have no virtue adhering to us that is sufficient to give us some warmth of heart, then we are bound to recall the evil that we have done as the only alternative. Then anxiety and sorrow arise and pile up within the *citta*, causing the anxiety associated with dying to increase further and further until it becomes overwhelming. If we have done virtuous deeds, as soon as we think about that virtue, the *citta* immediately grasps onto it and goes quite calm. This is experienced much more so by those who have practised virtue constantly—they need not be in doubt. That virtue is a companion and a friend that we can trust our lives to more truly than anything in the world.

We Buddhists should always understand about ourselves. Which means that the heart is the one thing that matters. It can be understood from two points of view: firstly, who is the teacher of the round of *saṁsāra*?; and secondly, who is the teacher of freedom from the round of *saṁsāra*? Both of these I have just explained. Please do not forget it!

Questions and Answers

Q1 W1: When I practise *samādhi*, I am liable to go into "yogi sleep", going deep into *bhavaṅga*. Some people say this is good and some say that it's not. Who is right in this?

A: Please explain yogi sleep, and tell me what you feel about it. After you have come out of it, what remains in your *citta*?

W1: Nothing remains of it, but I feel more fresh and lively.

A: One person says it is good, another says it is not good, but why do you go on believing them? You must know for yourself whether it is good or not. Therefore, it would not be right for me to say anything about this for fear that you may get attached to my words. The Dhamma presented here is at the beginning stage, so it has still not divided up and branched out enough so that the learner can gain value from it. So it is best to answer some questions and not to answer others. Answering everything fully can be a the *citta*. The person himself should examine the results that come from his own *citta*. My explanations must depend on who it is that asks the question. The answers I give, whether ordinary, middling or high, will be appropriate to the level of attainment of that person.

The nature of this question makes me think that the questioner's basis of Dhamma is uncertain. Those who practise meditation must have gone through this stage. If they have practised *samādhi* until the *citta* drops down deep, they must know. If they go to sleep in meditation and wake up knowing nothing, then there is only sleepiness all the time, so how can they know anything about the *citta*? *Samādhi* does not mean sleeping and knowing nothing. You must know specifically within yourself and not know anything else apart from yourself. On the other hand, if as soon as the *citta* is about to drop down into *samādhi*, we do not let it drop

down but force it to work, we will never be able to build up a firmness of the *citta* which accords with the teaching of *samādhi* for the attainment of calm. So we have to find the proper balance between calm and alertness.

Q2 W2: I still do not understand about the heart and *anattā*.

A: Do you understand *attā*? (The questioner replied, "Yes, I understand.") Have you ever practised *samādhi*? (Yes)

For the *citta* that has gained calm with any given object of attention (*ārammaṇa*), whatever method was used to do this may also be used to learn about *attā* or *anattā* accordingly. To begin with, however, you should hold on to *attā*. Later on you will gradually withdraw your attachment to *attā* until you can completely get rid of it, because the *citta* is naturally complete in and of itself. But the detached *citta* is not "self" or *attā*, which is a mundane convention (*sammuti*), for it is free (*vimutti*) and therefore different.

Q3 M1: How should we act so as to do *samādhi* properly? In normal daily life we have work which we must do. Must we stop doing it so that we can practise constantly?

A: If the *citta* knows about its own development and its own deterioration, it can progress steadily as the opportunity presents itself. But if it does not understand these things, then the *citta* becomes confused. Meditation depends upon the *citta* and the opportunity. If you have a lot of work to do and meditation deteriorates, then you fail to gain the results which you should gain. In that case, we say that the *citta* deteriorates. But in truth the *citta* does not deteriorate, for it is only the characteristics that indicate development or deterioration in the *citta* that are affected. The *citta* itself does not deteriorate.

Q4 M2: What about "monkey practice"—which means seeing someone else doing something and then acting as if one is doing the same thing. What should one do to know whether our practice is true or not true?

A: You yourself will know that for yourself. The answer is already inherent in your question. We ourselves are the central theme, so there is no need to seize hold of an artificial shadow.

Q5 M3: You said that when the *citta* constantly accumulates much virtue, it then goes to be born in a better place. I would like to know what is meant by "better."

A: The *citta* makes *kamma*, and the result of that *kamma* remains with the *citta*. It then sends the *citta* off so that it brings about what is appropriate to that result itself. The owner of that *citta* does not know about this and does not have any way to find out. But the Lord Buddha and the *Sāvakas* were able to know.

Therefore there is a general delusion throughout the world regarding the nature of the *citta* and what it contains. If we do the practice correctly, the *citta* will know itself. When the *citta* is skilled, mindfulness and wisdom are bound to become more and more subtle; then you will be able to know for yourself without having to ask anyone else. Nothing transcends the power of mindfulness and wisdom—and because all the *kilesas* are afraid of mindfulness and wisdom, no *kilesas* of any sort can exceed the power of mindfulness and wisdom that have been trained to proficiency.

Q6 M4: Is it difficult for the *citta* to return and become a human being, or not?

A: You have been born as a human being—was that difficult? We do not know about ourselves because the *citta* has no strength. If we have mindfulness then we will steadily come to know. I have previously explained that the *khandhas* have the nature to break up. At the moment when the *khandhas* are about to break up, the

citta turns about and becomes powerful. The amount of suffering we experience at the moment when the *citta* is about to part from the *khandhas*, will be an indication of whether the *citta* has mindfulness or not.

Those who practise usually understand the ephemeral nature of the *citta*, for nothing is more subtle than the *citta*, and it cannot be measured. If the *citta* has mindfulness and wisdom then we can follow it. This must depend on the mindfulness and wisdom which people have developed, and whether it is much or little accordingly.

It is said that at the time when the Lord Buddha was about to enter *Parinibbāna*, he entered *jhāna samāpatti* and went up from the first *jhāna* until he reached *saññā-vedayita-nirodha*. The Venerable Anuruddha Thera, who was very skilled in the ways of the *citta*, set his *citta* to follow the Lord Buddha in whichever *jhāna* the *citta* of the Lord Buddha entered. The Lord went up through the four *rūpa jhānas*, and then through the four *arūpa jhānas*, until he reached *saññā-vedayita-nirodha*. He rested there for a moment and then he withdrew back through the *arūpa jhānas* and the *rūpa jhānas* until he reached the state of *citta* of ordinary purity. Then he entered the first *jhāna* and went through to the fourth *jhāna*. After that, the Lord entered *Parinibbāna* between the *rūpa jhānas* and the *arūpa jhānas*. From then on it was beyond the ability of anybody to follow and know, because he had gone beyond and was free from every kind of mundane convention (*sammuti*).

While the Lord was entering the various *jhānas*, the Venerable Anuruddha Thera sent the flow of his *citta* to follow the Lord without letting up. He knew by following the state of the Lord Buddha's *citta* from stage to stage. When the other *Sāvakas* asked him: "Has the Lord entered *Parinibbāna* yet?" He answered: "Not yet". He told them each time the Lord entered and left each successive *jhāna*, so he was able to tell them what happened step by step until the moment when the Lord entered *Parinibbāna*.

Why was he able to know, from moment to moment the progress of the Lord Buddha's *citta* while he was entering and leaving each *jhāna*? This is very different from us who also have minds that receive and know various things up to a certain level? The knowledge and ability of the *citta* that has been fully trained is as different from the ordinary *citta* as the sky is from the earth. The *citta* which is filled with a heavy burden, as if a cesspit were weighing it down all the time, can in no way be compared with the *citta* that has become fully purified.

Clever people are therefore likely to believe in those who have knowledge and ability above their own capacity and to accept them as teachers. Like the followers of the Buddha who believed the Lord to be a world teacher, and thus their refuge. This differs from stupid people who deludedly think that they are clever, until their cleverness leads them to breakdowns, destruction and ruin. Even then it is unlikely they will realise their own stupidity. There is a lot of this kind of cleverness in the world of human beings—and it seems to be increasing at an unimaginable rate—until one fears that there will be no world for us to live in.

Tenth Meeting

Wednesday, June 19th, 1974

I WILL START WITH a talk about meditation.

Meditation (*bhāvanā*) is the process of looking into and learning about the body, and examining the mind (*citta*) in order to read its stories. The *citta* is writing various stories all the time, but we rarely ever read them.

It is the character of the *citta* to like thinking and imagining in various ways, even though we are often unaware of the good and bad thoughts we have at any particular time. This tendency will show itself when we practise meditation as the *citta* struggles and moves about a lot so that it cannot remain still and contented. People's minds usually think restlessly like this, which is a habit that is more difficult to break and bring to a halt than anything else. Because the *citta* is such a subtle thing, it must rely on mindfulness and wisdom to bring it under control by supervising and looking after it.

The more we examine what is right and wrong, good and bad, in ourselves, the more we are likely to find that there is no limit to the things which are faulty. Therefore, the principles of Buddhism teach us to contemplate so as to see what

is good and what is faulty in us. Sometimes we see things that are unpleasant and sometimes we see things that are pleasant.

Because the teachings of Buddhism teach more about the heart than anything else, they are the best tools for doing this work. The only tools that are really able to match up to the ways of the heart are the principles of Dhamma; but it depends on us whether we will be able to suitably equip ourselves with those tools or not.

Making things requires the use of tools. If the craftsman is well-skilled, those things will be beautiful and useful. This is equally true for a person's body, speech and mind. The body is like a growing tree, which may be either softwood or hardwood. The thing that matters is that the craftsman takes it and changes it into something useful, such as a table or chair, depending on what is wanted. When it is finished, it will have become something beautiful and useful, according to the type of wood and the ability of the craftsman. Similarly, when the body, speech and mind have been altered and corrected in accordance with the principles of Dhamma by putting forward our utmost effort with full commitment, they will become our treasures, having more value than all other things. This is because the value of people depends on their virtue; unlike animals, which are valued for their flesh and their hides.

Since people consider the value of animals to be in their flesh, their hides and other parts of their bodies, when animals die nobody is distressed. But this is not the case with people, for they must have good and seemly behaviour to give assurance of their value. Good behaviour of body, speech and mind is the value that elevates human beings and makes them beautiful. The value and beauty of the mind does not alter with time; unlike that of the physical body, which goes the way of nature and changes all the time. If we value virtue as an "ornament" decorating ourselves, that goodness remains and does not deteriorate even when the body gradually deteriorates.

When training in meditation, it is particularly important that you should try to restrain your thoughts and imaginings so that you may gain some calm and peace. Then you will begin to see an increase in the value of your heart. When doing meditation, try to let the *citta* confine its imagining to the work that you want to promote, such as "Buddho...Buddho...", which is the kind of work that causes the *citta* to become calm. When you try to do this with interest and with mindfulness in control of the *citta*, you will be able to attain a state of calm without being troubled by emotionally disturbing objects. A heart devoid of disturbing things is happy, calm and peaceful. Calm and happiness of heart devoid of all emotionally disturbing things is the kind of happiness and security that we long for the most.

Ekaggata citta is what the Lord Buddha called the *citta* that is established with only a single point of knowing. *Ekaggata citta* means to "know oneness". It is a happiness of heart that has no equal. Although the Lord Buddha entered *Parinibbāna* more than 2500 years ago, the whole excellence of his profound Dhamma remains a refuge in which all Buddhists have faith and pay homage to without ceasing. When the end of the "Buddha era" of this Lord Buddha is reached, there will still be another Buddha who will come anew, attain Enlightenment, and teach the world. This will happen again and again endlessly.

When the heart becomes calm and breaks free from emotionally disturbing things, you will immediately know the wonder of the heart, even though you have never known it before. It is a most strange and wonderful experience in the life of someone who has never known calm of heart. When the *citta* is calm, it is unlikely to produce any thoughts that give rise to emotional disturbances that might trouble you, causing confusion and distraction. The *citta* simply remains in a state of *eka citta*, *eka dhamma* until it rises up and withdraws from it. After withdrawing, the mind will think and imagine emotionally-based thoughts as usual.

If the *citta* can drop down into a state of calm even just once, it will arouse the meditator's enthusiasm in an amazing way, which he will hardly be able to forget

even for a day. In fact, it will make him try to practise meditation more and more. Because of that, someone who has already seen good results from practice is likely to put forward strong effort without slacking.

Let us respectfully put aside the knowledge that we have learned from the Buddhist texts for the time being, for I would like to explain the way of Dhamma from the viewpoint of practice. By learning about Dhamma, we come to know about Dhamma. The Dhamma has never been a secret thing from the time of the Lord Buddha's Enlightenment up to the present time, so the Dhamma that was taught and handed down to us still remains true. It is not in the least deficient. By practising Dhamma, we come to know the results that the Buddha taught. Buddhist practice still gives the same results that it did in the past—except that people who practise it now is not as capable as those who practised in ancient times were. In that case, the results will not be the same, for if the causes are insufficient, the results will be weak. Results without causes do not exist, so who should we blame? Apart from us, who is obstructing Dhamma and not following the way that the Lord taught? So we should correct our own causes first.

At the time of the Buddha, Dhamma was true Dhamma. People learned Dhamma so as to experience Dhamma by practising it truly. They did not hold back and turn Dhamma into something worldly. I would like to tell you that I myself am not entirely good in all ways. In coming to London to visit you, I have brought with me both good and bad tendencies. If I happen to make any mistakes, I hope that all of you who are listening will forgive me.

I will now give you an example of turning Dhamma into something worldly. To begin with, I studied the texts and managed to pass my exams, graduating in the third grade of Dhamma studies. I was very pleased with myself—and that aroused a group of *kilesas*. Later on, I graduated in the second and then the first grade of Dhamma studies. Then I became big and puffed up, increasing the *kilesas* until a big mass of them arose. I could not get away from them. I thought I was clever, but in-

side I was full of nothing but *kilesas*. Later on I became Mahā Parian, and I thought I was even more clever. But in truth, I was only clever at remembering the names of the *kilesas*, *taṅhā* and *āsavas*. I knew only their names, but I did not understand them, so I could not get rid of any of the *kilesas* from my heart. I simply thought that I was clever to graduate from this grade to that grade. If we are not circumspect, we don't know when Dhamma turns into something worldly.

As soon as I turned my attention to become interested in practice, I aimed to understand the true meaning of Dhamma. As my swollen pride gradually diminished, being a Dhamma scholar of this grade or that grade began to lose its importance, until I felt ashamed of myself and did not want to hear the title Mahā at all. This kind of thinking became another type of *kilesa*, for I was convinced that I was right. Previous to that, I liked to have the title Mahā placed in front of my name, but now I wanted Mahā to be in the background. The *kilesas*, then, are the false side of Dhamma—Dhamma that has changed into something mundane. After I had practised Dhamma more, those *kilesas* gradually broke up and disappeared from my heart.

In telling you this, I don't intend to criticise others. I am simply telling you about myself, and how I used to think, to illustrate what I mean by Dhamma turning into something worldly. If you do not understand the true nature of Dhamma, you will never be able to counter the *kilesas*, which can hide themselves in subtle and strange ways.

Samādhi, which previously was only a word for me, then became apparent within my heart. When I studied the texts, I memorised them by constant repetition until I became very skilled at reciting the words of Dhamma. But I came to know the truth of these things only when I practised meditation as hard as I could. I came to see for myself that Dhamma and *kilesas* are both found within the *citta*, and that the person who practises must realise this for himself and then strive diligently to promote Dhamma and get rid of the *kilesas*.

Samādhi, which is an anchor for the heart, became steadily more firm and stable. Then I knew with my own heart both the name and the experience of *samādhi*. When I examined the elements (*dhātus*) and *khandhas*, I saw that the body (*rūpa-kaya*) is entirely made up of the four elements, which are all within the scope of the *Ti-lakkhaṇa—anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*.

Concerning *paññā* (wisdom), having already learned its name, I then saw the heart putting it into practice—using wisdom to investigate as hard as it was able to, continuously, without letting up. Mindfulness and wisdom are aspects of Dhamma that we must know for ourselves. Then there are no doubts left about the nature of *magga*, which is the combination of mindfulness and wisdom that steadily makes the *kilesas* break away and leave the heart. In the end we see clearly within our hearts that *dukkha*, *samudaya*, *nirodha* and *magga* have been noble truths right from the beginning.

When mindfulness and wisdom understand the truth rightly until it is accepted by the heart, all doubts come to an end. Those who have no doubt can live peacefully without being disturbed by anything ever again. This is the end of the story. Then Dhamma is Dhamma, and the world is the world. Each of them is true in its own sphere, each existing independently by itself, so disturbances between the *citta* and external things no longer take place.

The phrase "*Tesaṁ vūpasamo sukho*" does not refer only to the *sukha* of the *Arahant* after he has died and his *sankhāras* have ceased. The quelling of those *sankhāras* that are the basis of *samudaya* (the origin of *dukkha*), which cause the *kilesas* to arise, is also *sukha*, even though he has not yet passed away.

Today I have explained the nature of the true Dhamma, as opposed to the Dhamma that changes into the way of the world. If we practise like the Buddha's *Arahant* disciples did, then we will get the same results as those who practised at the time of the Buddha. But it is a shame that, though Dhamma is the truth, we usually prefer to just play around with it. Because of that, we often hear the an-

noying argument that: "*Magga*, *Phala*, and *Nibbāna* can no longer be attained in this modern age"; or "No matter how diligently or how well we practice, there is no hope of attaining Enlightenment now". It sounds as if some omniscient being has monopolised *Magga*, *Phala*, and *Nibbāna* just for himself, even though he is so full of *kilesas* that nobody would dare to compete with him. In that case, Buddhism would be just a name. Those who believe in the true nature of Dhamma that Buddhism teaches would thus be robbed by the *kilesas* until there is almost nothing worthwhile left in their hearts at all. If people continue to oppose the truth of Dhamma in this way, in the future I am afraid Buddhism will be a religion of text books, and all that will remain are the words.

Eleventh Meeting

Thursday, June 20th, 1974

Discussion in the Morning

Q1 M1: I had a letter from Ven. Paññāvaddho so I knew that you were coming to London. I would like to ask about methods of developing mindfulness at times other than when I am sitting in *samādhi*—such as, when I'm doing work. Can this be done?

A: How should a businessman train himself in mindfulness? What must he keep in mind and reflect on? He must continually have mindfulness and clear awareness (*satisampajañña*) to know himself, what he is doing and why, without forgetting himself. This is how a business man can develop mindfulness. Someone who wants to develop meditation should be able to do it within the various aspects of the work that he must be involved in. Mindfulness and wisdom dwell in the heart, which is the "owner" of its work, so you should be able to involve mindfulness and wisdom in every aspect of your work—or be able to use them much more than

businessmen normally do. There is nothing to stop you from maintaining mindfulness while you work.

Q2 W1: I understand that the meditation practice of repeating "Buddho" should only be used when sitting in meditation. Can we use it at other times or not?

A: When you do your work, do you have to use your mind to think about things or not? If you meditate repeating "Buddho" but the *citta* goes away thinking about other things, then no kind of meditation is of any use. So in doing any kind of meditation, if mindfulness is present with the heart so that you can keep the meditation object in mind the whole time, you will be able to use that meditation object any time. In this regard, there is no prohibition for those who are interested in training themselves.

Q3 W2: I feel that my heart is like a monkey jumping from one branch to another. What should I do in this case?

A: Use the "monkey catching the monkey" meditation method. In other words, try to get mindfulness to keep the meditation word in mind and know it all the time. Because mindfulness is quicker than the monkey, you can get mindfulness to catch the *citta*, which certainly is like a monkey.

Q4 W1: There is a woman who wants to make an appointment to come and see you so as to seek help in overcoming a problem concerning her *citta*. Before she came to Buddhism, she went to some Indians yogis and learned to have faith in various *Devas*. Now she feels that the Indian *Devas* still get into her, which makes her afraid. She used to be a well-known piano player, but she has stopped work now.

A: This is a matter of the *citta* deceiving its owner. She is deceived by her own thinking, but she believes that the *Devas* of India come to deceive her. In truth, it is she who is deceiving herself.

There is a story of a newly-ordained *kammaṭṭhāna Bhikkhu* who was afraid of ghosts. His teacher took him to stay in a cremation ground. He was told to sit there alone while his teacher went to sit some distance away. His teacher told him to sit with his eyes closed and meditate until he came to call him, and then he should gently come out of meditation. The teacher then walked a short way off, sat down for a while and then got up and returned to the monastery.

The newly-ordained *Bhikkhu* sat with his back to the teacher and did his meditation practice without any thought of fear, because he believed that his teacher was sitting watching out for ghosts. After a long time, an apprehensive thought about ghosts arose. So he slowly got up and walked to find the place where the teacher said he would be sitting. When he got there and did not see his teacher, fear arose, causing him to run back to the monastery. The teacher then said to him: "I have not yet called you, so why have you come here?" Then he spoke sternly to the monk: "This shows that when you thought the teacher was there with you, you were not afraid; but as soon as you did not see the teacher where you thought he was, fear of ghosts arose so strong that you ran to the monastery without waiting for me to come for you." This, indeed, is the nature of the *citta*—it deceives us without there being any need for a ghost to come and deceive us at all.

Therefore, instead of Indian *Devas* getting into her and causing her to be afraid, it is most likely that her own *citta* is creating this deception.

Q5 M2: How should we train in *kammaṭṭhāna* so that it is not dangerous?

A: If, having planted a tree, you then frequently move it from one place to another, it will not grow well. When you often change the method of training for *samādhi*, it is not likely to give good results. Train yourself to set up the breath as your object

of attention and constantly be mindful of the breath at whatever point it is felt most prominently. This practice is not dangerous because the *citta* is not focusing outside to search for things to bring inside and deceive you. Investigating with wisdom is similar, but the *citta* must be interested in the investigation and stick to it without going off track.

Q6 W2: When I meditate repeating "Buddho" I breathe in thinking "Bud" and breathe out thinking "dho". Is this a good way?

A: There is nothing wrong with it, and it can bring peace of heart if it suits your character and you like it. But it will only bring good results if you have mindfulness. If you do not have mindfulness to supervise and control it, then no matter what type of meditation practice you do, it will not bring the desired results.

Q7 M1: When doing *ānāpānasati*, we are supposed to watch the breath. But what should we look at? Do we look at the one who knows the breath as well as the breath itself?

A: To begin with, your mindfulness will be aware of both the in-and-out breaths and the awareness that knows the breath. But later on the breath and the awareness of the *citta* will gradually find each other and fuse together. Then even the person who is doing the practice disappears, leaving only the knowing nature of the *citta* standing alone without being concerned about anything else.

A Dhamma Explanation (evening)

When people talk about things that they like, it makes them happy and enthusiastic. For example, when an athlete speaks about sport he can go on endlessly, even forgetting to take a meal or drink anything, for he is sustained by the fun he is having.

People who practise Dhamma also experience this. When they talk about meditation (*citta bhāvanā*) and about the field of practice, they are likely to become more and more engrossed until they forget time. They never notice the hours passing when they talk together about the practice of Dhamma, while everyone present enjoys the conversation.

The teacher trains and teaches his students about the attainment of *samādhi*, of mindfulness and of wisdom. He talks about gradually getting rid of the *kilesas* by means of the power of mindfulness, wisdom, faith and effort, and this makes them even more engrossed in following what he says.

Even if the students have not yet been able to experience Dhamma in any of the ways that their teacher has, listening to him speak about his practice still makes them feel a sense of joy in the Dhamma that their teacher has come to understand. He explains it in a manner that is so fascinating that they never feel that they have had too much of it.

The Lord Buddha said that "The flavour of Dhamma is superior to all other flavours"; of all flavours, none tastes better than Dhamma. If the taste of Dhamma were not so supremely excellent, beings in the three worlds of existence would be unlikely to pay homage to and worship the Dhamma. In that case, the Dhamma would not be considered supreme, nor would it be a suitable refuge (*saraṇa*), something in which all good and honest people can have implicit faith.

All Buddhists pay homage to and have faith in the Dhamma because the Dhamma is a thing of true excellence. The Dhamma's prestige spread out from each of the Buddhas and their respective *Sāvaka Sanghas* until it came down to us. That the knowledge of Dhamma came down to us is due entirely to the fact that those who partook of the "taste of Dhamma" with their hearts, then taught this Dhamma which they had known, seen and experienced to the world, and are still doing so at the present time.

They did not merely guess or suppose that the taste of Dhamma was superior to all other tastes, for they knew the taste of Dhamma and saw absolutely clearly into all aspects of Dhamma. Then they brought out that knowledge, that "revelation," and proclaimed it, teaching the world in accordance with the fundamental truths that they understood fully, by taking their own understanding as evidence in proclaiming Dhamma and teaching the world.

When we say: *Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi* (I take refuge in Dhamma), how deep and profound is that Dhamma? It is not a superficial Dhamma that can be understood superficially and taught to the world in a superficial way. The Lord Buddha knew the truth of Dhamma and taught it to the world at all levels, so those who listen to Dhamma should listen with interest and practise it with sincerity. As a result, they will gain Dhamma that reaches the heart stage by stage, until the various kinds of *kilesas* are all removed. In fact, the *kilesas* can be entirely removed to your complete satisfaction so that you know it clearly in your own heart—*sandiṭṭhiko*—knowing and seeing for yourself. Then, even if the Lord Buddha were sitting in front of you, you would not waste your time asking him questions, because the nature of truth would be the same for both of you.

The wisest sages are very careful to make a clear distinction between Dhamma and the world. If Dhamma were like the world, it would not be called Dhamma, because if they were both the same just one word would be enough to describe them both. But Dhamma and the world are not the same thing; even though they are

both exist together, they are not one and the same thing. Although they dwell together, they are different. It's like all of us here are dwelling together at present—*Bhikkhus* and lay people dwelling together, but not one and the same, men and women dwelling together, but not one and the same, children and adults dwelling together, but not one and the same. Although we are living together, we are separate individuals. It is like this with Dhamma and the world.

The wisest sages practised until they knew clearly by their own inner experience. Then they could lead the religion steadily and consistently without acting in gross or unseemly ways to the eyes and ears of those who had faith in Buddhism. Sages mean the Lord Buddha and the *Sāvaka Arahants* who brought Buddhism for us to admire in the most beautiful and seemly way. They did not bring it in a manner that would alarm or disturb the listener. In this regard, I will tell you a story of the wise men who followed the way of the Buddha—a moral lesson.

The Venerable Assaji had penetrated Dhamma and become an *Arahant* with the other Pañcavaggi, who were the first five *Sāvakas* of the Lord Buddha. At that time Ven. Upatissa, who later became Ven. Sāriputta—the highest of the *Sāvakas*, who was placed on the right hand side of the Lord Buddha—was ordained in the institution of wandering religious mendicants (*paribbājaka*) and practising according to their customs. When he saw Ven. Assaji, who was very beautiful and seemly in all his actions and manners, walking back and forth, and looking to the right and left with a very composed deportment that instilled great respect and confidence, he followed stealthily behind Ven. Assaji. As soon as they were out of the village, Ven. Sāriputta approached and asked him who his teacher was and what his teacher taught. Ven. Assaji replied only briefly to the question about what Dhamma the Buddha taught, saying: "My knowledge is not great, so I will just speak of it in brief for you to hear. '*Ye dhammā hetupabhavā...*—All *dhammas* arise from a cause; when the cause ceases, they must also cease. This is the teaching of the Lord Buddha." That is all.

Then Sāriputta, the *paribbājaka*, penetrated Dhamma and immediately became *Sotāpanna*. As for Assaji, who taught him, he did not then announce that he himself was one of the *Arahants*, in fact he did not say anything at all. But Ven. Sāriputta may have been able to know his attainment in Dhamma when he heard the Dhamma which Ven. Assaji taught him, because at the stage of *Sotāpatti magga* and *Sotāpatti phala* it is possible to penetrate deeply and to know the truth of someone who has a level of attainment higher than oneself. Ven. Assaji was able to teach him a wonderful kind of Dhamma that he had never heard before, allowing him to penetrate the true nature of Dhamma.

But it seemed from the texts that Ven. Sāriputta never heard Ven. Assaji say that he was an *Arahant*, because Ven. Assaji did not make any outward show of being an *Arahant*. This is the first example to illustrate what was previously said.

The second story concerns Mr. Kamanit, who met the Lord Buddha in the house of a potter. When the Lord asked him where he was going, he said he was going to see the Buddha. The Lord asked: "Where are you going in order to see the Buddha?" He replied: "I am going a long way, for the Lord is sure to be at Sāvatthi." But the Lord did not tell him that he was the Lord Buddha. How profound was the subtlety of the wisest sage in not telling him, for the Lord knew all the ways of cause and effect, so he knew that to tell him would have led to some form of loss. When he had weighed up the situation, he saw that it was of greater value not to tell, so he allowed him to leave without saying anything about his being the Lord Buddha, even though Mr. Kamanit was still searching for him.

As soon as the dawn came, he left the Lord Buddha. Shortly he met Ven. Sāriputta and Ven. Moggallāna who were walking along the road towards him, going to see the Lord Buddha in the pottery. They questioned Mr. Kamanit, who said that he was going to see the Buddha. Both of the *Sāvakas* asked him whether when he came through that place he had met anyone there. He said that he met a *samaṇa* in the pottery whose behaviour and manners made one respect and trust him very much.

"He was diligently practising all last night. He taught Dhamma in a melodious and beautiful voice, and what he said went to the heart and was very impressive. But I am still not satisfied, so I want to go and meet the Lord Buddha. That's why I left."

Ven. Sāriputta and Ven. Moggallāna did not say anything to let him know that the person he had met was the Lord Buddha. Why did they say nothing? Because this is the way of the sages—if anything was to be said, it was for the Lord Buddha to say it first. Ven. Sāriputta and Ven. Moggallāna spoke together only when his back was turned, saying: "Eh! That fellow has no idea that he has already met the Buddha. But since the Lord did not say anything to him, we cannot say anything either." This is how the sages immediately understand each other so their knowledge and understanding does not lead to disagreement. Compare this to people with *kilesas* who only want to advertise themselves! Instead of making the effort to get rid of their *kilesas*, they incite them, causing them to increase all the time. In the sphere of Buddhist practice, this sort of thing tends to happen all the time. Therefore I am anxious about all of my Buddhist friends, including *upāsakas* and *upāsikas* and all others who have faith in the Buddha's teaching.

When someone who is following the Lord Buddha's path of practice does something that is improper or disturbing, it is likely to cause deterioration and harm to him and to Buddhism. So those who practise Dhamma should always be self-controlled and strive to maintain virtue, because Dhamma is different from the world.

In the practice of Dhamma, someone who truly aims for *magga*, *phala* and *Nibbāna* until he penetrates to the desired goal of *arahatta phala*, would not then tell people that he has attained Enlightenment. Why? Because the words "I have attained Enlightenment" are in no way useful as a means of helping the listener understand Dhamma. Actually such a claim could only be used as a basis for vainly boosting about one's attainment in order to win people's praise—that's about all. So the Lord did not do this. Instead he used the method of giving advice over and over

again, teaching the ways of cause and effect in a manner appropriate to each individual listener. He therefore taught those came to be trained according to their level of attainment, instructing them in ways that were suitable to the time and the situation. He taught according to reasons and results; but he did not say that he was accomplished in Dhamma up to such and such a level, for this would be an unseemly thing to do. The Lord never spoke without a proper reason—behaviour that is not in harmony with the status of a true sage.

In the time of the Buddha, the *Bhikkhus* had great confidence in each other, and they were very careful about this matter. Even in the present time, someone who truly follows the way of the Lord Buddha will not deviate from this track. However, this is not the case with a large number of modern-day "sages", who seem to be always ready to go "overboard". This shows that the excess which is spilling over the "edge" of the *citta* is not Dhamma.

If your knowing and seeing are true, just let them resound within your own heart—do not let them go out externally where they can create disturbance. A sharp blade should be kept in its sheath where it will be safe. Throwing things about the place, whether words or weapons, is dangerous both to you and to others. If put away properly, they are not dangerous; in fact, you get nothing but value from them. When someone advertises boastfully, saying: "I have attained *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmī*, *Anāgāmī*, or *Arahant*", there is no reason why people who hear this should be glad. In fact, it may change their faith in him, making it gradually diminish because they then see the *kilesas* of that person quite clearly. They just feel wearied and fed up, as though there is nothing else worth respecting in that person.

Therefore, all those who truly aim to practise Dhamma must be circumspect and not announce Dhamma of that kind outwardly. Such behaviour is not the way of the Lord Buddha—but the way of a rotten fish that announces itself so that flies swarm around.

People strive to gain the higher levels of Dhamma, and that is good. But if they announce their attainments in an unreasonable manner, it means that they are actually troubled in their hearts—or they have a hunger in their hearts. So when they say these things, it is not nice to hear. But even though the person himself may not be aware of his mistake, he should listen when other people admonish him or warn him. A person who is aiming to progress in Dhamma should become aware of himself and be more restrained and careful in the future. Don't turn yourself into a rotten fish within the sphere of Buddhism. The Dhamma is fragrant; because of that, it has led people throughout the world to respect and pay homage to it for a long time.

There is the story of a present-day *Bhikkhu* who lived not very long ago, while Ven. Ajaan Mun was still alive. He and two other *Bhikkhus* went together to the mountains to practise and train themselves in the way of *kammaṭṭhāna* meditation. While doing meditation at about midnight, this *Bhikkhu* suddenly thought that he had penetrated Dhamma and become *Arahant*. He then felt around in his handbag and brought out his snuff pipe, which he blew like a whistle—"Peep!" The other two *Bhikkhus* who were staying with him on the mountain thought he was in danger, so they quickly ran to find what had happened. It never occurred to them that he would blow a whistle to signal that he had penetrated Dhamma, so they thought there must be some danger.

"Hey, what's the matter?" they asked.

"Nothing is the matter, I have just attained *Arahant*."

"Heck! You've attained what?"

"I've attained *Arahantship*!"

The two *Bhikkhus* said nothing—they probably did not have the heart to. "It's one thing to reach *Arahantship*, but oh-ho! Having attained *Arahantship* you blow a whistle; what level is that?" This was their doubt. But they did not say anything because they got fed up and returned to their respective locations.

The next night at about midnight, the two *Bhikkhus* heard the whistle blow again. They thought, "He's probably attained to nobody knows what level now!" But they couldn't not go and see him because the three of them were living together, so it was their duty to help each other in the case of a real danger. So the two of them went to see the *Bhikkhu* who blew the whistle and asked him:

"You blew the whistle again, so what further level have you attained? Have you reached the level of madness? Whatever it is, it's a real nuisance." The whistle *Bhikkhu* announced: "The other night I thought I had attained *Arahant* so I blew the whistle to call you and tell you, for I was very glad. But then tonight I examined and found that I had not attained *Arahant*, so I had to blow the whistle to let you know the truth." The two *Bhikkhus* saw the funny side of it and felt pity for the madness of that "whistling *Arahant*". They then told other *Bhikkhus*, until it became a well-known story.

There is another story about the same *Bhikkhu*. One day while sitting in meditation, he saw a disc of bright light as big as a coconut fall down in front of him. When he saw light, his *citta*, which had attained *samādhi*, then went out following it. The light moved away, so he got up from where he was sitting and followed it without knowing what he was doing. The light went up a tree, so he climbed up the tree following it. The light then floated up into the sky and disappeared. Then his awareness returned, and he realised that he was up on a tree. He cried until other *Bhikkhus* came running to see what had happened. After helping him to get down, they asked him about it. He told them that a light that appeared in his *samādhi* had led him up into the tree.

More than two years ago, a *Sāmaṇera* told me a similar story. This *Sāmaṇera* came up to me and told me about various kinds of psychic knowledge that he had experienced. I listened until he had finished, and then I said: "*Sāmaṇera*, you must be careful; you will grasp at shadows or else climb up a tree following a light." I did not know what this *Sāmaṇera* had been like in the past, but later on someone told

me that he had already persuaded some *Bhikkhus* to follow a light. The light led him into the forest and the *Sāmaṇera* ran after it, calling the *Bhikkhus* to come and help him catch the light. So the *Bhikkhus* ran after him searching for the light. A lot of noise and commotion ensued, until another *Bhikkhu* who knew about the *Sāmaṇera* came to stop them.

Truly speaking, this type of psychic *citta* is not to be found in many people; in fact, only about five percent of people are like this. If they are under the right teacher, people of this sort do well because they have adventurous natures. I have also been of this kind, but I knew what the *citta* was up to and did not send it out externally. Sometimes, light shot up through me as though flying up into the sky. It was so powerful that it seemed as if I would die at that time and there would have been nothing left of me to cremate. I understood what was happening and withdrew the *citta* to its original base. As soon as the *citta* withdrew, the light immediately died away. Some people must go through many weird things like this. Then they will know about various experiences that happen to those who practice. They can use that knowledge to guide others so they don't go off the path or fly up into the sky—even without wings!

At one time I was sitting doing meditation in a village shelter at a place where there was a very fierce type of ghost that could possess people, even *Bhikkhus*. I was doing meditation in the forest at four o'clock in the morning, and saw what looked like a person, which was the fierce ghost that the villagers had talked about. His eyes were shifty and restless when he came in to where I was resting. As soon as the ghost came and confronted me while I was sitting in *samādhi* meditation, I instinctively ducked to avoid it and then my body fell over with a thump. When I became aware of myself I was very amused for I knew that this had been done by my own *citta*.

We must examine what we see and feel with wisdom to find out for sure what the truth is; then we must find an effective way to deal with it. If we automatically

assume that everything that comes our way is absolutely real and true, we will be easily deceived and go wrong. We must examine ourselves constantly and learn to know ourselves, otherwise we cannot teach others.

The characteristics of some people's minds are so strange that if they do not have a teacher they will get lost. But if they do have a teacher to give them careful advice, such people can quickly make valuable gains, which gives them an advantage. But they must train themselves in mindfulness and wisdom so as to know what the *citta* is up to. Then they will not become lost, and their meditation will be of widespread value—more than one would imagine.

The *citta* and the objects (*ārammaṇa*) of the *citta* can be quite bizarre, so it is difficult to describe what truly happens. But in the case of people practicing Dhamma who have similar characteristics and similar experiences, they can speak together and understand each other. It's similar to people who learn a technical subject: they can speak together about it, whereas others cannot understand.

Questions and Answers

Q1 W1: In England there are no good teachers, so what should we do about it?

A: If there is no teacher available, you must practise *samādhi* on your own, and at the same time constantly examine your experiences so as to keep pace with them. The *citta* may have a tendency to want to know about external things that happen while doing *samādhi*. If it is released and allowed to go out to know and see things of an external nature, you may think that you have gained the "*Deva* ear" (clairaudience), the "*Deva* eye" (clairvoyance), or whatever. If you examine that experience without immediately believe that this is true, you will see whether the *citta* is merely creating its own fantasy, or whether it is seeing something real. The best

way is to turn round and examine yourself, then nothing doubtful or questionable will happen. The important thing in practising for proper development of your *citta* in the initial stages of practise is to keep the *citta* within yourself. Don't let it go out externally; for if you do, various visual images (*nimittas*) may arise in the *citta* which you will not be able to follow and understand clearly, and that can lead you to lose your footing. But when you have become skilled at practice, there are no problems.

Q2 M1: If we attain *upacāra samādhi* and something happens, how should we deal with it?

A: You should report the experience to your teacher and tell him all about it. Other than that, I do not wish to give any answer, because it would be of no value. So I will pass on to the next question.

Q3 W2: In this country there are lots of books about *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*. When we learn too much about these things, we tend to have an unclear understanding of what is what.

A: When you learn from books and study things that are much higher than your level of understanding, knowledge may reach the level of outer space. You do not understand what is what, because it is too subtle for you. The study of knowledge is different from the truth of that knowledge. We know by means of studying, whereas the Noble Disciples (*Ariya Puggala*) know by means of understanding the truth—so they can abandon *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* and transcend suffering, and reach the end of attachment, as illustrated in the following story:

Once a mother and her child went to catch fish. Both of them were groping in the mud looking for fish when the child unknowingly grasped a snake and raised it up to show his mother. His mother knew the danger, but her mindfulness was equal

to the situation so she said to the child, "That's a fine fish, keep hold of it tightly and don't let go. I will come to help you." So the child held the neck of the snake tightly. As soon as his mother reached him, she hit the snake and killed it. Then she told her child: "That was not a fish, but a poisonous snake. If I had told you that before, you might have been afraid and let go of it. Then it would have turned and bitten you. So I had to use this method."

This story is an allegory for people who practise Dhamma. In other words, if you merely read a lot of books on Dhamma, then you will try to jump from *attā* to *anattā* and end up not believing anything until you have no principles to hold on to. You must hold on to and use *attā* (self) while you are practising Dhamma through successively higher levels, in the same way that you take hold of a ladder and use it to go up step by step. As you pass each step, you leave it behind. You do not hold on to that rung and try to carry it with you. In that way, you climb up until you reach the room upstairs where you want to go. Then you leave the ladder behind without trying to hold on to it. You simply enter the room to rest and relax happily. This is the way with *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*—ultimately you discard them. But you cannot discard them to begin with, because you must depend on them as the means to go up step by step, discarding each successive step along the way until you are able to discard the lot, holding nothing.

Twelfth Meeting

Friday, June 21st, 1974

Discussion in the Morning

Q1 W2: I have done *ānāpānasati* knowing the outgoing breath and knowing the incoming breath, but I have found that my *citta* cannot get calm. It felt as if it was about to enter a door, but it did not enter.

A: If you follow the breath in and then back out again, this is the kind of result that's produced. You should "define" the breath at that point where it is felt most clearly. You should feel that the breath is entering or leaving at that one spot, passing by that one point. If you do it in this way, you will not feel as if you are going in and out of a door as you said.

Q2 W3: My mind is the same as that of the first questioner in that I am anxious and concerned for other people. It is difficult to take hold of my mind and make it stay in one place so as to get calm. How should I correct it?

A: As soon as you realise that the mind has gone out to other people, it stops. Then you can set up the mind once again to do the practice. As soon as you realise that it has gone out again, it stops, allowing you to call it back in to do the work that you have set it to do. When you make it return often, it will tend to remain. Then you can attain calm.

Dhamma Talk in the Evening

> *To begin with Tan Ajaan talked with those Thai people who had come. He talked about people who wrongly make a living off Buddhism, such as those who get photographs and pictures of various Ajaans and sell them. After this he gave the following talk to everyone who had come.*

JUST NOW WE WERE speaking about those who do harm to Buddhism, either intentionally or unintentionally. Things that are wrong now have always been wrong. They may appear to come from many different sources, but truly speaking, they arise only in the heart. A great deal of deceptiveness exists in each of our hearts, including my own. Previously my heart was like that. But eventually I came to realise it by virtue of my training in mindful awareness, which helped me to constantly study the state of my mind. Thus I was able to know which things are deceptive and which are true.

Mostly, the mind creates only false things, which we deludedly go after without being in the least aware that they are super-deceptions. In fact, we believe them to be entirely true so we trust them and go after them without putting up any resistance in order to test this kind of thinking. For example, a person sits in meditation and in the first several seconds he feels that it is true. He fixes his attention

on "Buddho... Buddho..."and he feels that it is the true Buddho for four or five seconds. But by the time he reaches one minute, all the false things start to flow from the *citta* more and more. This gives rise to thoughts of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, which branch out and spread everywhere—but all of it is deception. Meanwhile, the word "Buddho" has disappeared from awareness, leaving only the emotionally charged objects and situations (*ārammaṇa*) that he is used to thinking about, which have always deceived him. They drag him away without him being aware of it. Once he has allowed these false things to capture his attention, he becomes engrossed in them.

Buddho then disappears and *ānāpānasati* goes silent—even though he is still breathing. It is silent as regards paying attention, silent as regards the way of fixing his attention with determination and with mindfulness—all this has disappeared into silence. As soon as he is able to recollect himself, he says: "I have done meditation for long enough but I do not see any good results arise whatsoever. Why is that?" It is right that thoughts of this sort should arise, but then he goes wrong again. In other words, thinking like this implies that he sees his faults, but he does not think: "The reason I did not get good results was that I did not practice correctly." Thinking like this would call his attention to the fact that he should have mindfulness! Yet, he returns to his previous state of delusion—again, saying: "...I have sat for a long time so I think I'll rest for a short while. After I get up I will really have a go at it." But he does not sleep just for a short while. He sleeps deeply until the sun comes up, and when he wakes: "Oh goodness!" The next day he does it again, so he goes on continually fooling himself.

The next day he starts off with five seconds, and the next day four seconds, and so on getting steadily worse. This is the way of those who deceive themselves. Apart from this, he also harms himself saying: "Here, I have been practising meditation for a long time and I do not see that I have gained any virtue, so why should I go on doing this meditation? It is most likely that I am a person with unfortunate

tendencies of character who has little merit and little virtue in the way of Dhamma of the Lord Buddha. If I continue doing this, it will not lead to anything of value so it will be only a waste of time. It is better to stop entirely!"...and so on, without ever really considering whether stopping meditation is a good thing. If it was truly good, then people all over this world who never do any meditation ought to be good people since long ago. Again, one can think: "How can stopping be better than doing meditation? If I stop simply because I have not seen good results, in what way will it truly be better? From what did the lack of results come? Just from myself. I am constantly cheating myself."

Of all false things, the most important ones are those within yourself. Deceiving yourself is a very important problem which you should examine and investigate. All of you have been cheated and deceived enough already. Perhaps the first three or four seconds of meditation are good, but that the next three or four are not. When you become aware of this, you should establish mindfulness on the practice again, and continue to reestablish your mindfulness over and over again. Then the time will come when you know at once when the *citta* displays anything that goes in the wrong direction. You will begin to know what is going against your intended purpose. When you know that, you will reestablish mindfulness and focus the *citta* on the practice anew. With full awareness, you must focus on the practice again and again, until eventually your awareness is continuous.

As soon as you determine to practise truly and properly, the false side of you will probably do so as well. In other words, the *kilesas* wait and try to get in during those times when you are off-guard and unmindful. Once you have established your determination, and your direction firmly, the *kilesas* give way. But when I say "give way", it should not be understood to mean that they give up and lie down like we do! They give way, waiting and watching for a chance to get back at you. When they see an opportunity, they pounce on you quicker than a cat catching a rat. Then they disappear again, and crouch silently. They wait to hit you again

when you are off-guard. If you are vigilant, they do nothing; but when you become over-confident about your vigilance, they are sure to be encouraged to move again. Thus you are continually cheated—probably every time.

So it is important to search for a method and a suitable place to do the work of reforming yourself. This will help to practise diligently in many directions using many methods, like the ones I have written about in the "Biography of Venerable Ajaan Mun", or in the "Paṭipadā", or in the book called "Forest Dhamma".

The life of a *Bhikkhu* is different from that of a lay person. Wherever *Bhikkhus* go to practise, their life is convenient and comfortable, because they have only one duty—meditation. Like when they venture into the forests and hills, and live in frightening places where there are various types of fierce animals, such as tigers, bears and snakes.

When *Bhikkhus* go to stay in such places, their attitude changes. For example, laziness in regard to maintaining effort gradually diminishes. Their vigilance increases; and as soon as they encounter a critical situation, all laziness vanishes. When they are left with no way out and nowhere to escape to, mindfulness immediately takes charge and invigorates their determination to practice. The fear of death may cause them to break out in a sweat, but their mindfulness remains sharply focused. Sometimes a tiger roars repeatedly right by the path a *Bhikkhu* is using for walking *caṅkama*—it does not come just to have a chat! This has in fact happened to me. It happened many times, how many I don't know, but the tiger roaring there was no small cat—it was a big striped tiger.

At that moment, it seemed as if all my hair stood on end, and I felt I was shivering even though it wasn't cold. But the *citta* was not allowed to withdraw, so it revolved round and round until it descend to the heart. At that moment I entrusted my life to the Lord Buddha. Then there was just the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha to guard and preserve my heart. Once I had submitted my heart to the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, then I was prepared for whatever

happened. If my time to die had truly come, at least my *citta* would not be careless and unguarded. I thought: "While I live may I have mindfulness so that I am not caught at a disadvantage. Should a tiger devour me, so be it, but I will not abandon the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha." As the *citta* completely submitted to the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, all longing ceased. The longing for life was no longer there. Attachment to the body disappeared, leaving only the *citta* with single-minded focus on Dhamma.

In a situation like that, fear disappears entirely—there is no trace of it left at all. The *citta* converges and plumbs straight down to the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha in the heart, completely. It seems then as if nothing can ever come to disturb one again. When the *citta* plumbs straight down like that, it becomes full of strength. All fear disappears, so that even if the tiger roars and comes right up to you, you may feel able to walk over and stroke it gently with *mettā*. There may be a feeling of close friendship with it, since both of you are companions in birth, old age, sickness and death. Then there may not be even the slightest thought that the tiger is dangerous, or that it might harm you if you were to go and stroke it. When a situation like this occurs, only a feeling of intimacy and gentleness for it remains, since all fear has disappeared.

There are many methods for training and disciplining the *citta*. Once you find a good basis, something which you can recollect to reflect upon, you may bring up this basis and put it into practice any time. Then whenever you find yourself in a situation where you are cornered and at your wit's end, that method which has produced good results for you in the past will immediately come to you.

If you act like a "warrior" every time you confront a dangerous situation, you are bound to gain an important lesson from it. Unless, that is, you hesitates at the critical moment and cannot make up your mind. If the *citta* is uncertain and vacillates because it cannot commit itself, then you might go mad. But when the *citta* truly accepts the situation, nothing can overpower the *citta* that is attached to Dhamma,

so that the two are as one. There will also be a certainty at that time that nothing can do you any harm, whether it is a tiger or any other danger in the world. You will not be afraid of anything at all. Thus, the *citta* and Dhamma, when they fuse together as one, have power over everything else in the world. For this reason, Dhamma is superior in the three worlds of existence.

In truth, the power of the *citta* is greater than anything else in this world. Training in the way I have just mentioned will help you to find that out. You will also learn about what is false within yourself. If you live in normal surroundings and do not go to places where you are cornered with no way out, the master of deceit will invade and overpower you, destroying everything. When you do encounter a situation where you are cornered with no way out, instead of you being always under pressure, you are the one putting the pressure on the internal master of deceit. If you do put pressure on it, even only once, you will know the truth about the *citta* and the one who deceives the *citta* in a way you will never forget. When Dhamma reaches and enters the *citta*, you can then speak of these things with authority because the experience makes a powerful impression on your *citta*.

When the person who trains himself to the utmost willingly entrusts his life to Dhamma with complete commitment, the results are truly satisfying. Victory over the master of deceit is a truly amazing experience, one that you will never forget for the rest of your life.

If the *citta* has never realised its true power in a time of necessity, it will not know its own significance, so you will always take refuge in other people. The Lord Buddha's saying: *attāhi attano nātho*—self is the refuge of self—has yet to be accepted by the heart. But whenever something happens that makes you realise the heart's true power, you will then believe the Dhamma saying: *attāhi attano nātho*, in a way that truly impresses the heart.

The *citta* that penetrates to the truth when it is at an impasse, with no way out—such as when you have a fever and pain overpowers you, or when you sit in medi-

tation for a long time, or when you meet with a life-threatening incident, is a *citta* that knows its own strength. If you are a true spiritual warrior, the *citta* revolves around internally without hoping for any external support. That is when the *citta* comes to see its own significance at all times.

This is a most wonderful experience, for if you can get past those life-threatening incidents, you will probably have no anxiety in regard to life and death. Concern about painful feeling when it arises and the anxiety associated with dying—how you will be able to withstand the pain, where you will be reborn after you die, fear that you have wasted your life and so will be at a disadvantage in the next life—none of these concerns will arise in the *citta* at all. In other words, when your life reaches a critical juncture, the *citta* and mindfulness immediately go inward and find each other so as to enter the battlefront. Since you have fought and won such battles before, death will present no problems for you because mindfulness and wisdom will quickly take charge and lead the way.

When death approaches, mindfulness and wisdom join forces. They are not likely to flee or to withdraw, but will immediately spin round and go in to confront the situation. Then, whether you live or die, you are not willing to be a slave of the master of deceit. Rather, by relying on your faith in Dhamma and your faith in yourself, you will seek to know the truth at that moment. Faith in Dhamma is to be found right here! Where else can you find faith in Dhamma? The scriptures tell the truth, but if you do not find the truth of Dhamma in your own heart, you will have no firm evidence to confirm the truth and give you confidence. But when you encounter a dangerous situation, which allows you to see the truth quite clearly, then the truth you experience does not differ from the truth of Dhamma that is revealed in the scriptures.

When faced with a critical situation, none of the sages like to stay where there were many people and much disturbance. They liked to find a place that suits them

and their manner of practice. Mostly, they succeed in gaining results by living in isolated or lonely places—isolated both in body and heart.

People like us do not act like that. As soon as we begin to feel ill, you know how it is: "Oh, where are all my children? Where are all my grandchildren? This child is not looking after me; my grandchildren are not paying any attention to me. Where have they all gone? Where have all my relations and friends disappeared to? What's happening? It's not good for them all to go and lose all interest in me. Do they dislike me? Nobody has any sympathy for me. I'm about to die and nobody even turns to look at me." The *citta* gets increasingly troubled, but we cannot find any basis to grasp hold of so as to reduce it by ourselves. "Previously my husband and I lived happily together; but now that I am truly about to die, I don't see his face here at all. My husband is bad, my children are bad, my grandchildren are bad, everyone is bad."

But the badness is really comes from her own heart. The filth that's there is brought out and thrown about externally, making everything filthy. The filth in her heart comes from her fear of death. Her inadequacy in the face of death is what goes about throwing filth at other people and venting discontent. This is what is meant by "having nothing as a basic principle (or basis) in the heart". We never think about *attāhi attano nātho*, for our refuge is entirely based in other people.

As soon as we are born, we begin taking refuge in other people. When we are born, we must of necessity depend on other people, such as our mother, our father, our nursemaids, one person after another, until we come to teachers, professors, and so on. Once we become dependent on others, we want to go on taking refuge in other people until the day we die without ever having the least thought of taking refuge in ourselves. This makes it very difficult for us to establish any basic principles within our hearts at all.

The Lord Buddha taught that we should take refuge in ourselves—*attāhi attano nātho*. We should only depend on other people as a means of gaining the strength

we need to be able to take refuge in ourselves in the future. This is an important principle that Buddhists should constantly keep in mind.

Various lessons are taught by mother and father, others by teachers and professors, and others by the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. We should take the knowledge and understanding that we have learned, and diligently put them into practice in order to find a way to help ourselves. When we realise the significance of ourselves, other things seem unimportant, so we let go of them all. Such is the way of someone who is trained in the practice of Buddhist meditation. When our situation becomes critical, we will want to be left alone, away from involvement with friends and relatives, or anyone else. Our duty at that time will be clear: to let the *citta* whirl round and go down inside. There should be no longing or yearning for anything in this world. Earth, water, air, fire—we have examined them all and seen quite clearly that everything in the physical world is composed of elements. We give them names such as body, clothes, house, and so on endlessly, but things of this nature are not really stable—in the end they are going to simply disintegrate and break up.

The mindfulness and wisdom, that we have developed in meditation, separate out the elements (*dhātu*) and *khandhas* with complete clarity. Everything is examined fully in the light of truth. Then the *citta* is true; the elements are true; feeling (*vedanā*), memory (*saññā*), thought (*sankhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) are all true. Everything is true in its own sphere, so there is no disturbance and we can pass beyond contentedly—*sugato* (well-gone). There is no longer anything to cause us trouble or disturbance. We no longer create *dukkha* and difficulty for ourselves or others, so we enjoy supreme happiness and contentment.

When you die, there is no need to invite *Bhikkhus* to the funeral to chant "*Kusala dhammā, akusala dhammā*", thereby disturbing everyone. This is what I constantly tell the people who come to see me at Wat Pa Baan Taad. Ajaan Mahā Boowa speaks with certainty in this matter.

Whoever wants *kusala dhammā* should develop it within themselves. After someone has died, those who are still living go about inviting *Bhikkhus* to give merit and *kusala dhammā*. They chase after the *Bhikkhus* who have gone into the forests and wild places, which is all a disturbing nuisance. Instead, they should search for *kusala*—skillfulness of heart and mind—within themselves while they are still alive, until they get enough. That is a method that will bring happiness and contentment to us right now in this life. It's no use to wait until after we have died to invite *Bhikkhus* to come and chant "*kusala dhammā...*", which merely becomes a nuisance to the *Bhikkhus*. That is contrary to the purpose of Buddhism, which teaches people to be clever in searching for what is good, and to make that a part of themselves while they are still alive, so that when they die they are *sugato*—free of worry.

I have been ordained for many *vassa* already and I am still developing just *kusala dhammā*. So when Ajaan Mahā Boowa dies, please do not invite *Bhikkhus* to come and chant at his funeral—please don't make trouble for them. If Ajaan Mahā Boowa is still stupid after developing *kusala dhammā* from the beginning of his practice until now, then he is beyond help anyway, so let him sink alone. But do not let other people come and become stupid also. In saying this I am speaking bluntly. This is the way I talk to my followers, and it is the truth. I am never concerned about anything. When the time comes to relinquish this body and mind, I will relinquish it with pleasure and die entirely free from anxiety.

The whole world embraces body and mind. When the time comes to die and abandon them, there is sadness, sorrow and grief everywhere because people do not want to accept death. When the body is dying, they want it to live; and when the time for death has come, they do not want to go. The Lord Buddha taught us the simple truth: "When the time to go has come, then go. But when the time to go has not yet come, then live".

So if there are any sweet drinks, bring them here; while I am still living I will drink them. But when I am about to die, don't come and be a nuisance, for then I

will relinquish everything, this entire heavy burden—*bhārā have pañcakkhandhā*. Having relinquished everything in the true natural way, one passes on contentedly and comes to ultimate fulfillment. The Lord Buddha was like that, and so were the *Sāvakas*. We have followed the footprints of the Lord Buddha—how else could it be? Without doubt it must be this way.

The hearts of beings in this world are whirling about in the round of *saṁsāra*, carrying all the defilements that lead them again and again to birth and death, endlessly. So please, all of you try to make your hearts become free from the round of *saṁsāra*. Then you will be absolutely contented, as there will be no need to go round and round.

From tomorrow I shall no longer be here for I must return to Thailand. I will think of all my brothers and sisters here. I came here to England only for the purpose of helping people in their spiritual practice. I did not come for any worldly purposes at all. Wherever I go, I never think of going for the sake of goods or money or wealth, but I go for the sake of people's hearts so that they may gain something of value. In coming to England, I also have a feeling of fullness in my heart in the same way.

Intentions are more important than anything else. If your intentions are good, everything else will be good as well. But if your intentions are not good, everything is spoilt and goes wrong accordingly. Therefore, in coming to visit my brothers and sisters in London, I came with good intentions, and when I go I shall think of your good intentions. Perhaps we shall meet again, either here or in Thailand. In other words, you may go to visit us out there, or we may come to visit you here.

This is enough explanation of Dhamma for today so I will stop. Those of you who have anything in your hearts that you want to ask may do so now. Tomorrow there will be no time in the morning, for we will eat early and then must go.

Questions and Answers

Q1 M1: If we practise Dhamma until we know that we have *dukkha* continually going on and on, what result will we get?

A: Usually you see *dukkha* in those things which cause great difficulties. Those things that cause you pleasure are seen to be *sukha*. As soon as the conditions that cause pleasure change, you see that as *dukkha*. But you don't have the wisdom to cure that *dukkha*. Finally, you lie down submerged in suffering with no interest in searching for the way out, because you consider that trying to search for the way out from *dukkha* is difficult. Therefore, you must submit to *dukkha* being your friend all the time.

The training and practice of Dhamma so as to know *dukkha* as it truly is consists in using meditation and wisdom to examine how to train the *citta* so that you can extract the *kilesas* that cause *dukkha*, and so find the taste of happiness in the *citta*. This is bound to help you find true and genuine happiness, giving you a basic principle to hold firmly in the heart no matter what the circumstances are.

Q2 W1: When we meditate using "Buddho", is it necessary to be seated in meditation?

A: You can do it in all postures. The Lord Buddha did not teach people in order to put them into a tight fix when they are struggling with their *kilesas*. He taught people to use skill and cleverness so as to always be victorious. We should therefore search for clever ways to be the victor, following the Lord.

The Dhamma that I have explained to you here is ninety-five percent Forest Dhamma. I have explained the importance of meditation as a means of keeping the focus of the *citta* within, so please don't let the *citta* go out externally. By nature the

citta likes to focus outwardly. Constantly doing the “Buddho” meditation can help a great deal in curing this problem.

Glossary

Ācariya: Teacher; sometimes also a term of respect for a senior monk.

Anicca: Impermanence; transience; instability.

Ānāpānasati: Mindfulness of breathing; one of the best known forms of meditation practice.

Anattā: The animistic concept that people attribute to themselves and others, which gives rise to the firmly held belief that there is a presiding self-entity in the five *khandhas*. It is actually a convenient fiction and, truly speaking, quite false.

Ariya: Noble.

Asubha: That which is unpleasant, loathsome, contrary to what is usually desired.

Avijjā: Fundamental ignorance, in the form of blind unknowing.

Āyatana: Sense fields; thus, the fields of seeing, hearing, etc.; mental sensation.

Bhava: Realms of existence, birth.

Bhāvanā : Development by means of meditation.

Bhikkhu: A monk, usually in reference to Buddhism. One who lives on donated food.

Brahmaloka: The higher non-physical realms of existence inhabited by the *Brahma* gods.

Buddho: A *parikamma* for the recollection of the Buddha.

Citta: That underlying essence of mind where Dhamma and the *kilesas* dwell. In its pure state, it is indefinable and beyond *saṁsāra*. It controls the *khandhas*, but does not die when the *khandhas* die.

Desanā: The teachings of Dhamma; a Dhamma talk.

Deva: An angel-like being of the *deva*-realms, which are immediately above the human realm.

Dhamma: Truth; the ultimate order underlying everything; the teaching of the Buddha.

Dhātu: Element, i.e., the four elements of earth, water, fire and air; and the sense organs such as the eye, ear, nose, etc.

Dukkha: Discontent, suffering.

Ekaggatārammaṇa: Non-dual, oneness of the *citta*.

Jhāna: Various states of meditative absorption, including the four *rūpa* and the four *arūpa jhānas*.

Kammaṭṭhāna: Lit. "basis of action"; the meditation object that leads one to gain skill in *samādhi* or in wisdom; the term used to identify the Thai forest tradition founded by Venerable Ajaan Mun.

Kesā : Hair of the head.

Khandha: A heap, usually referring to the five *khandhas*: body, feeling, memory, thought and imagination, and consciousness.

Kilesa: The defilements based upon greed, hatred and delusion.

Loka: The world.

Magga: Path, usually the Noble Eight-Fold Path leading to *Nibbāna*.

Mahā: Great; superior; in Thailand, a degree in Pāli studies.

Mettā: Friendliness; pure love.

Nāma: Name; the four mental factors of the five *khandhas*.

Ñāṇa: Knowing; instinctive knowing; intuitive knowing.

Nibbāna: Lit: "Extinguished"; the ultimate goal of Buddhist training.

Nimitta: A sign; in meditation practice, a mental image which is usually visual.

Paññā: Wisdom.

Parikamma: Preparatory practice. Preparatory meditation.

Rāga: Lust; attachment.

Rūpa: Form; shape; the body.

Sabhāva: Nature; a thing in itself; a condition.

Sacca: Truth.

Samādhi: Absorbed concentration which has many levels and kinds.

Samatha: Calm.

Sangha: The monastic order; a group of at least four monks.

Sankhāra: The constituent parts that make up anything; that which puts together the parts that make up anything.

Saññā: Memory; recognition.

Sāsana: The Buddhist religion; a system of teaching and training.

Sati: Mindfulness.

Sāvaka: A hearer (of the teaching), usually in reference to those who heard the teaching directly from the Buddha.

Sīla: Morality; moral behaviour.

Taṅhā : Craving, including: greed, hate and delusion.

Thera: An elder, a monk who has been in the Sangha for ten or more years.

Ti-bhava: Three states of being: *kāmaloka*, *rūpaloka*, and *arūpaloka*.

Ti-lakkhaṇa: The three characteristics of all existence: impermanence, suffering, and non-self.

Upācāra: Approach; access; the name of the second stage of *samādhi*.

Upādāna: Attachment, clinging.

Vedanā: Feeling.

Vihāra: A dwelling place.

Viññāṇa: Consciousness.

Vipassanā: Meditative insight that is deep and effective in eliminating the defilements; insight that arises based on *samādhi*, and not just an intellectual exercise.

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